



Reaching Out

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Technology Today



When John’s Advocate visits, they view his iPad for pictures of where he’s been lately and discuss what he wants to do next. His staff snap the pictures that help facilitate conversations between John and family or friends. John uses an App recommended by his speech therapist when he wants to be better understood. And his frequent medical appointments are easier with his iPad — John enjoys his favorite music in the car, and while sitting in the waiting room he focuses on games. John particularly loves the games.

Several By Their Side members enjoy using an iPad. We’ve found the following to be helpful:

- ◆ Purchase a Gorilla case with the iPad for protection.
- ◆ Work with the residential agency to establish a written policy signed by staff to clarify staff responsibility (learn how to operate, keep charged, assure it goes on all outings and is returned, report malfunctions, sign log to transfer at shift change.)
- ◆ Include policy for use by staff (e.g. a photo of John at each outing, view videotaped training and demonstrate skills to assist with use of speech app; no personal use by staff)
- ◆ Download favorite music.
- ◆ Google “apps for people with disabilities” to find those tailored to your needs and interests. Also see <http://www.goodnet.org/articles/7-best-apps-for-people-disabilities-list#>

ABLE Savings Accounts

In April, Governor Hogan signed into Law a Bill establishing the Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program. Expected to be operational by October 2017, this program will allow people with disabilities and their families to deposit up to \$14,000/year (\$100,000 account maximum) in a tax free account without interrupting benefits such as Social Security or Medical Assistance. ABLE account funds can be used for disability related expenses such as medical/dental care, education, housing, transportation, obtaining employment, assistive technology, and community based supports.

By Their Side is encouraged that the ABLE savings program will give account holders additional financial resources to address their needs even if their parents are gone, even if a special needs trust is not possible. For some, out-of-pocket expenses such as medication and dental care routinely deplete personal funds, limiting resources for other needs and life enriching experiences. Paying for such health expenses through an ABLE account should free up personal funds to enjoy life. For others, personal accounts grow more quickly. Currently when personal funds near \$2000, residential staff make purchases to protect Medical Assistance benefits. An ABLE account could serve as a savings account for funds over \$2000, allowing greater planning around purchases.



We hope you will consider establishing an ABLE account with your relative, and help to save for a brighter future.

Lifelong Advocates for Marylanders with Developmental Disabilities

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2015 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

By Their Side's Annual Sponsors Meeting and 50th Anniversary Celebration was held November 8, 2015 at The Olive Grove Restaurant in Linthicum, Maryland. Eighty-two people attended including parents, siblings, members, current and past board members, guests, personal advocates and staff.



Board President Mark Wagner presented By Their Side's Annual Report and discussed its fifty-year history. The Board of Directors hosted a champagne toast in honor of this milestone anniversary, and By Their Side's new Leadership Award was presented to Martin Lampe. Treasurer Jeff Dahlka discussed By Their Side's financial report and positive investment performance. Executive Director Kathy Vecchioni highlighted the wealth of experience of By Their Side consulting Advocates, and By Their Side's work in the past year to develop resources for families. This included formation of a multi-disciplinary and parent workgroup to explore resources for planning for the future of an only child, and partnership to host Maryland's first Sibling Conference. By Their Side representatives also met with a delegation from the United Arab Emirates to discuss disability rights and non government funded advocacy.

Christine Marchand, Executive Director of The Arc Maryland and guest speaker shared moving videos and remarks to highlight the parent movement responsible for services in Maryland today including By Their Side's program, changing expectations, and the importance of supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live lives of their choosing.

Following lunch, a panel representing parents, Arc Baltimore, Arc Frederick, and By Their Side discussed issues and resources related to planning for the future of an only child, and those with siblings.

The resource guide, Planning for the Future of an Only Child (and those with Siblings) and By Their Side's 2015 Annual report are available on the website.

Hold the Date!

By Their Side's Annual Luncheon and Meeting will be held **Saturday November 5, 2016** from 11:00am - 3:00pm. at Hellas Restaurant in Millersville, conveniently located 1/4 mile from exit 10 (Veteran's Highway) off I-97. Please mark your calendar and look for program and registration information this summer. Guests are always welcome, and ride-sharing may be available.

Martin Lampe Leadership Award

Do you feel indebted to someone for making the world a better place for your relative and others with disabilities, or for working tirelessly to bring about changes needed by you and other families?

By Their Side's Martin Lampe Leadership Award honors a leader whose actions have improved the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Award will be presented at the November 5 Annual Meeting. **Please email or send us your nomination by September 15, 2016.** Please tell us why you have nominated this person, and let us know how to contact them.



This award is named after it's first recipient, Martin Lampe. Martin was an inspiration to many, and served as Board President of By Their Side as well as the Arc of Prince George's County. He was an excellent steward, asking the hard questions, and supporting flexibility to address the needs of the individuals and families we serve. A mathematical physicist, Martin used his skills to develop By Their Side's actuarial study to set member rates to assure lifelong advocacy services for his family and yours.

We are sad to report that In 2015, not long after receiving this award, Martin passed away. In addition to being a leader, he was a loving husband and father, and a good friend. We are glad we were able to thank him for his contribution.