



XH QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Leadership Notes — From Jenn & Teresa

Welcome to the 1st Quarter edition of our newsletter! We have quite a bit to recap for you!

Xceptional Heroes continues to grow and thrive! In February, we celebrated reaching 1,000 members! The true reward in this achievement is that the majority of our members are active participants! This means we are accomplishing our mission and meeting the needs of our Heroes in and around Genesee County!

Enjoy the attached content and the celebration of all that we've done in the past 3 months! There is so much ahead for us—we are just getting started!

Recent Events/Activities:



In January, we hosted a dine/donate fundraiser at BD's Mongolian BBQ in Flint. We had an incredible turnout from our friends and families! The manager told us that we were the most organized organization they've worked with and we earned the highest fundraiser payout they've had so far! Huge thanks go out to Tina Seidel, Christopher Cassidy, Greg White, John Huff, and Dave Smith for being our guest grillers and working hard for those dollars! We would also like to send our most sincere gratitude to Complete Wealth Advisors for their generous donation matching of up to \$1,000!



Al Serra Foundation very generously sponsored Pickleball classes that were conducted at Ascension Genesys Health Center! They paid the cost for our equipment and the professional coaches for one session! This class immediately followed our weekly fitness classes and became a very popular activity! We are looking forward to pursuing our newly acquired pickleball skills throughout the summer! Thank you to Al Serra Foundation, Coach Leavey, Pro Sam Khalid, and Pro Ben Yeaker!



In January, XH officially expanded our leadership team by adding two new board members!



Marketing Director—Angel Hall. Angel is responsible for all our creative elements including our awesome shirts, bags, visors, and marketing materials. Angel will build on her marketing contributions to XH, elevating our presence, our swag, and running our online store.



Digital Content Manager—Shelby Mottin. Shelby will manage our website, Facebook page and group, and our Instagram page! We are SO lucky to have Shelby as she comes with a wealth of experience and has unlimited wonderful ideas! If you have noticed a greater XH presence on social media—that's all Shelby! She has done an amazing job and she hit the ground running!



Urgent need for the Board—Volunteer Coordinator. If you feel compelled to give back to our Heroes, we urgently need someone to fill the roll of Volunteer Coordinator who will work with our network of existing volunteers at activities, as well as recruit additional help and provide valuable input into the activities we schedule. Please let Teresa or Jenn know if you have an interest in this position!

XCEPTIONAL HEROES AND ANDREW'S ARMY BASKETBALL TEAMS

XH had two basketball teams this year! Xceptional Heroes is our more competitive team and we've added Andrew's Army, which is a developmental team. The Heroes team was coached by Ed Schlosser and Greg White, and the Army team was coached by Andrew Hatton and Teresa White. Both teams did "xceptionally" well ALL season long and ended with winning records! Both teams placed first in their divisions at the Regional Tournament in Brighton, MI which qualified both teams to compete at the Special Olympics State Games held at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, MI! Xceptional Heroes proudly brought home the Bronze medal for their Division after two very tough games and Andrew's Army brought home the GOLD medal for their Division! We are so incredibly proud of both teams for all their hard work, their dedication, their sportsmanship, and most of all—their HEART! Well done teams!



Our volunteers from Powers High School facilitated a “SHEroes Night Out”! We partnered with Melissa Schummer of McKenna’s Squad Beauty Bar and Michelle Holcomb of MK Beauty Co to create an evening of glam, pampering, giggles, and a wonderful dinner afterward! This activity was LONG overdue and so worth the wait! You can expect to see another evening like this scheduled for our lovely ladies again this year!



2nd Annual Bowling Fundraiser at Grand Blanc Lanes

XH hosted its second annual bowling fundraiser and we are so appreciative of the outpouring of support from the community! A great time was had by all between bowling, corn hole and an amazing and creative variety of raffle items! XH is funded solely by charitable donations from generous donors and from community grants that see our potential and the gap in services that XH serves. The funds that we earned from this year's fundraiser will go towards a variety of needs including the purchase of outdoor fitness equipment, supporting community outreach efforts, educational programs, establishing a fund to ultimately purchase a van or mini bus and to go towards efforts to find a permanent home for XH!

We want to thank our event sponsors for their generosity and support: Pita Way, Wentworth Real Estate Group, Corcoran Fire, Lynch Family, Silverton Family, MTA, Complete Wealth Advisors, Moments by Shelby, and Xolo of Fenton. We are also so grateful for all the raffle item donations and the personal donations from those of you who could not attend! THANK YOU!!



In addition to our own fundraiser, Xceptional Heroes was also selected as the beneficiary by these very generous organizations in which we received (or will receive) fundraiser proceeds! A heartfelt thanks to the Flint Firebirds organization, Pure Pro Wrestling, and Above Par Disc Golf Club for your heart and your giving to such an amazing cause! You are HEROIC!



Hero Spotlight—Hayley Bragg

(lovingly written by Hayley's aunt)

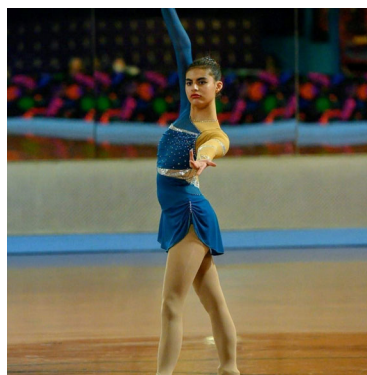
At 22 years old, Hayley is a shining example of resilience and determination, defying the odds with cerebral palsy and developmental delays. Her journey through education and athletics is proof of her strong-willed spirit and passion for life!

Growing up in Grand Blanc, Hayley navigated her schooling with grace and perseverance. From her early years at Anderson/McGrath K-3, to specialized classes at Brendle Elementary, West Middle School, and Grand Blanc High School, she embraced each challenge with enthusiasm. Despite her challenges, Hayley's teachers recognized her remarkable gift for socializing, making her a beloved figure among peers and educators alike!

Beyond the classroom, Hayley found solace and joy in the world of athletics, particularly through her involvement in Special Olympics. From bowling to track and field, volleyball to cycling and basketball, she fearlessly pursued her passions by showing what it really means to be a good sport and being a great friend to her teammates. As a devoted member of the Xceptional Heroes family, Hayley found a supportive community where she could thrive, making lifelong friendships and meaningful contributions to others. Because of her dedication, wonderful socialization skills, and her ability to make anyone feel comfortable, XH has requested that Hayley act in the capacity of a mentor/ambassador. Hayley greets new Heroes, introduces them to others, and always goes out of her way to make sure everyone has a great time!

Aside from her above accolades, it is on the roller rink where Hayley truly shines. A competitive Roller Figure Skater, she has captivated audiences and judges alike with her grace and skill. With countless competitions under her belt, including national events, Hayley has consistently showcased her talent and determination, proving that nothing can hold her back from achieving her dreams.

As Hayley continues her journey at the Transition Center, improving her life and job skills, she remains an inspiration to all who know her. With her infectious positivity and zest for life, she reminds us that no obstacle is impossible and that every challenge is an opportunity for growth and triumph. In the face of adversity, Hayley's story is a powerful reminder of the boundless potential within each of us, and a testament to the power of perseverance, passion, and unwavering spirit!





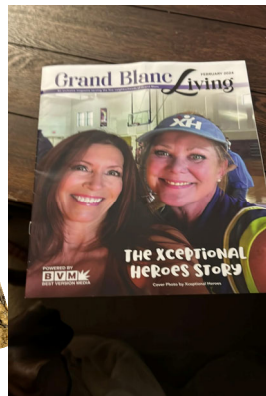
Teresa and Angelina Mayer were vendors at Autism Alliance of Michigan's Navigating Autism Today Conference on March 8th. Bret Rife and Hayley Bragg attended as XH Ambassadors! Bret and Hayley did such an amazing job of introducing Xceptional Heroes to this VERY large audience and describing their experiences as Hero mentors and ambassadors! Honestly, Bret and Hayley did most of the talking and Teresa and Angelina were just there to pass out marketing materials! This was a very successful conference and MANY valuable contacts were made that will be very beneficial to XH as we move forward!



Jenn met with Grand Blanc Township Supervisor Scott Bennett and State Representative David Martin at Qamaria Yemeni Coffee Co. They spent a great deal of time discussing the mission and goals that Xceptional Heroes hopes to accomplish; both long term and short term. A very good dialogue was held and both gentlemen are so supportive and impressed with XH! Excellent guidance was provided for "next steps" and valuable contacts were given to help us expand our vision of making Genesee County the best place to live with an intellectual disability! Just another brick in the foundation of all that we hope to build for our amazing Heroes!



Xceptional Heroes was featured in area neighborhood magazines including Grand Blanc Living, Fenton Neighbors, and Davison and Goodrich future publications! We were also featured as a community partner in My City Magazine! We are so honored for this exposure! These articles generated additional donations and reached families that were looking for social engagement for their loved one living with an intellectual disability!





Volunteer Spotlight—Tina Seidel

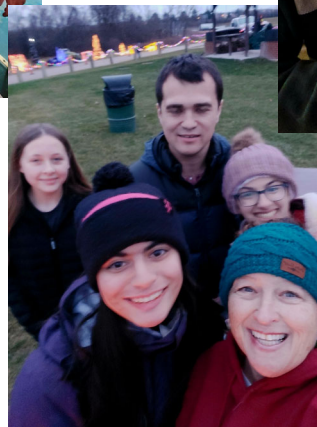
Tina has been an invaluable volunteer (and friend) to Xceptional Heroes for a couple years! Tina first came to XH quite by accident when she saw a post on Facebook from Greg Greer (Bubba) about Bingo and she wanted to play! When she showed up for Bingo, she quickly found out she was there to volunteer and not play! Tina has been a lifeline to XH since that day and we are so grateful for all that she has done, and continues to do, for us! Tina has opened her home and hosted cookouts, she assists at craft nights, she mentors at activities, and basically does anything she is asked to do!

Not only does Tina volunteer with XH, but she is also very active in her church and has always done mission work. She volunteers with other organizations and lives a life of service. Anyone who knows Tina, knows of her immeasurable love for her son and her granddaughters! We think she is slightly fond of Gerald, too!

When Tina wrote her bio for us, we wanted to share her words directly:

“Such an amazing bunch of kids/adults. All so different in their own ways and each individual brings a different skill and love to this group. So, approximately 4 years later, I still do what I can, when I can, and I would truly be heartbroken if I was not a part of them”.

THANK YOU, TINA, FOR YOUR HEART AND YOUR GIVING SPIRIT! WE LOVE YOU!



Board Member Spotlight—Kelley Smith (XH North Administrator)

Kelley joined Xceptional Heroes in 2023 as an official board member after attending as a parent caregiver for a couple years. XH has visions of expanding our services to the outer perimeters of Genesee County in an effort to reach more Heroes who need our services. Kelley works to facilitate activities in the Clio, Mt. Morris, Durand, Montrose areas, as well as all the functions hosted by our main group.

Kelley and Dave have been married for 32 years and they have 2 sons—David and Alex. Alex lives with autism. Since Alex's diagnosis, Kelley has worked diligently to research and help Alex live and thrive with Autism. Kelley has also been on the Parent Advisory Board with GISD for 10 years, Special Olympics volunteer for over 20 years, including State Summer Games chaperone. Kelley also belongs to another board for a community service group in her area and has been involved for approximately 20 years. Kelley and Dave are also elders in their church for 15 years. They are one busy family!



Kelley works full-time from home as an administrative coordinator for Complete Wealth Advisors. In her spare time (what????), she enjoys gardening, refinishing furniture, painting, crafts, target shooting, and any sport that her body allows her to participate in!

In Kelley's words: "Which brings me to my heart's long-term goal, to create a living community for those with disabilities. A place where all heroes can live, work, and grow in their life skills. I want a place where parents can know that their child/adult is in good caring hands, with a full support group around them and will continue to thrive when it is their time to leave this earth".

THANK YOU for your time and commitment to our Hero family, Kelley! You are one of a kind!

Contact Us:

www.xceptionalheroes.org

xheroes2021@gmail.com

Looking for ways to help? We are always looking for peer volunteers and parents who are available to jump in and assist! XH is staffed 100% with volunteers who dedicate their time and energy providing fun and safe activities for our Heroes. While there is no limit to the amount of fun activities we can schedule, unfortunately we are having to scale back on the number of events offered weekly due to an inability to adequately staff these events and have responsible personnel on hand to run operations. We all have jobs, families, personal matters that require our attention, etc., just like you. We truly need your help and we hope you will consider sharing your time and talents with us and our Heroes so we can continue to grow and provide these much-needed services!



HEROIC COOKING

XH is looking for a new home for our very popular cooking classes and we have some exciting prospects, but in the meantime, here is an easy recipe! Everybody loves comfort food in the colder months! Here is a hearty and healthy soup that includes lots of vegetables AND beans for protein, plus it's easy to substitute some of your favorite ingredients! When soup includes protein, it can be a meal all by itself! Maybe add some toasted bread or rolls, too! Enjoy!

Mama's Minestrone

(Yes! Jenn's mom's recipe!)

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 3/4 cup finely chopped carrots
- 3 whole garlic cloves, smashed
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can garbanzo beans, undrained
- 1/2 cup tiny raw pasta
- 1 additional cup broth
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 1/2 tsp dried Italian seasoning
- 3/4 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 can cannellini beans, undrained
- 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 2 x 2 square parmesan rind, optional
- Salt & pepper to taste

1. Heat oil on medium, add smashed garlic, turning frequently so as not to burn.
2. Add carrots, celery, onions, and herbs. Saute for 3 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Add 3 cups broth, tomatoes, beans (undrained), and the cheese rind. Bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Add raw pasta and the additional 1 cup broth, continue to simmer until pasta is al dente.
5. Remove cheese rind and garlic before serving. Add salt and pepper to taste.

* the soup will thicken overnight. Adding additional broth each time you reheat it will keep the consistency.





March 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Flint Firebirds Autism Awareness Night Dort Financial Center 6pm See event for details	2
3	4	5	6 Bingo Night Richfield Rd Church 5:30-7pm Brngg \$2.50 in quarters	7 Fitness Class 11:30-12:30pm Pickleball Class 1-2pm	8 Monthly Social 6-8pm Faith Lutheran	9 Make A Difference Day Glow Walk Details TBA
10	11	12 Craft Night Holly Library 6-8pm "no charge"	13	14 Fitness Class 11:30-12:30pm Pickleball Class 1-2pm	15 2nd Annual Bowling Fundraiser GB Lanes 6-8pm or 8-10pm	16 Pure Pro Wrestling 6-10pm Flint Iceland Arena FREE
17	18	19 Yoga with Kelsey Holy Family GB 6:30-7:30pm	20 Bingo Night Richfield Rd Church 5:30-7pm Brngg \$2.50 in quarters	21 Fitness Class 11:30-12:30pm Pickleball Class 1-2pm	22 Bowling GB Lanes Annex 6-8pm \$10/person	23
24 Movie Matinee & Lunch at BWW Kung Fu Panda 4 Lunch @ Noon 'ish	25	26 Laser Tag RollHaven 5:30-7:30pm \$5 admission/\$2 per game	27	28 Fitness Class 11:30-12:30pm Pickleball Class 1-2pm	29	30
31						

Happy January
BIRTHDAYS

- Jennifer Silverton 1/3
- Miracle Stocker 1/5
- Shannon Les 1/7
- Nicholas Gregoire 1/14
- Lindsey Freund 1/15
- Davis Linson 1/19
- Mindy Groat 1/25
- Johnny Irwin 1/25

Happy February
BIRTHDAYS

- Josh Humphrey 2/5
- Ricardo Rueda 2/5
- Allison Baker 2/13
- Ryann Conner 2/14
- Vanny Stocker 2/15
- Janelle McKenzie 2/18
- Jessica Dail 2/19
- Angelina Bontumasi 2/20
- Cole Alvado 2/21
- Michelle AnnMarie Mann 2/27
- Caitlyn Grojean 2/28

Happy March
BIRTHDAYS

- James Gannon 3/1
- Merideth Sanford 3/3
- Mike McCauley 3/4
- John Pease 3/6
- William Gregoire 3/12
- Aaron McBean 3/14
- Lexie Allen 3/15
- Pat Peters 3/17
- Derek Carroll 3/19
- Adam Raisin 3/20
- Myles McCormick 3/23
- Katelyn Snyder 3/23
- Megan Zahron 3/30
- Alisha Hart 3/30

Xceptional Heroes—Board of Directors

Listed below are our dedicated members who so generously donate their time, talents, and hearts to this very worthy foundation and the Heroes that we serve:

President— Jennifer Silverton

Vice President/Treasurer—Teresa White

Secretary—Christine Huff

Volunteer Coordinator— Vacant

Marketing Director—Angel Hall

Social Media/Digital Content Manager—Shelby Mottin

XH North Facilitator—Kelley Smith

Xceptional Heroes can be found on the following platforms:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Email—xheroes2021@gmail.com
- Website—www.xceptionalheroes.org

Links to helpful resources:

- Genesee Health System (GHS) - <https://genhs.org/>
- The ARC of Mid-Michigan—https://www.geneseeserves.org/agency/detail/?agency_id=91265
- The Disability Network—<https://disnetwork.org/>
- Michigan Alliance for Families—<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/adult-agency/>
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services—<https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mrs>
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons—<https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/bureau-of-services-for-blind-persons>
- Social Security Administration—https://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwkqSIBhDaARIsAFJANKggCteSma-49wGUlsiBPr0dh2tuvD0oKZjspwHqICByzQ7X_C0woBcaAsUOEALw_wcB