

# Potential Perspectives

FALL 2020



Potential RBT Ingrid Standen and Kaiden enjoy a laugh during play time.

## Staying Ahead of the Safety Curve

Things may look the same on the outside of Potential, but inside our staff has been diligently working to create an environment that exceeds CDC safety guidelines while maintaining the same quality, individualized programming we have always provided to clients and students.

“We’ve been open in-person and working on this for six months already, so we are ahead of the curve,” says Ben Ballard, Operations Manager for Potential. “In many cases, we have been able to maintain client programming and provide increased service hours in response to COVID. We have continued to follow, and update operations based upon local and state guidelines. Since we serve a variety of clients, our operations are also expanding to meet the highest level of regulation across the board for consistency.

“Additionally, our current screening protocol meets the Department of Human Services Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) regulations,” he adds, “which goes above that of local or state recommendations for general business.”

Under the new structure:

- » Children can still maintain a level of safe interaction
- » Changes to client and student routines have been minimized

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Happy fall! Things are now in full swing at Potential. Many of our students and clients have returned to in-person instruction and we’re thrilled with how well they’ve adapted to the safety measures we’ve put in place to protect them from COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses. This has been a top concern for our team, and we’ve been working diligently, studying the science, data, and best healthcare practices to ensure an environment that is safe for everyone.



Understanding that some people aren’t ready to return to the building, we continue to provide in-home instruction with dedicated Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) as well as telehealth appointments as needed. While this has been a challenging six months, I can’t stress enough how grateful I am for the support of our staff, administration, board members, clients, and community. Everyone has pulled together and truly made the most of a challenging situation.

As we move toward the close of 2020, we have a lot to look forward to. In addition to welcoming many new staff members, we are working hard to present an amazing virtual gala on Friday, Oct. 16. I hope that you will all consider joining us for this signature event (see page 3). Soon after, we’ll launch our end-of-year appeal. Proceeds from both events will support our “Buy the Bus” campaign (see page 3).

In January 2021 we’ll kick off Potential’s 15th Anniversary Celebration. There are many exciting projects in the works around this milestone and we can’t wait to unveil them in the New Year! And as always, in the months between, we’ll be doing our best to celebrate the holiday season in the safest and happiest way possible.

I hope that you enjoy this latest issue of *Potential Perspectives* and welcome any thoughts, questions, or ideas you may want to share with me. Wishing you a happy and healthy fall season!

Sincerely,

*Kristine Quinby*

Kristine Quinby, MEd, BCBA, LBS  
Founder, President and CEO  
Potential / Springtime School

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## Staying Ahead of the Safety Curve

- » Clients and students each have their own materials and storage spaces
- » There is scheduled access to shared spaces such as the library, playground, and art room
- » Dedicated staff members are disinfecting rooms and surfaces on a regular basis
- » Unnecessary staff interactions have been limited by implementing telehealth when possible
- » Additional electronic resources, such as new tablets, were purchased for clients, students, and staff
- » Bluetooth headphones allow virtual supervision with direct feedback to Behavior Analysts
- » Administrative staff is working from home to allow more spacing for clients
- » Additional desks and chairs were added and laid out in such a way to maximize space in client and student areas

“The office manager is still onsite every day to assist with material needs,” says Ballard. “And there is an administrator on duty at all times as well.”

“Things look different than when we left in March,” says Kim Werner, high school teacher for Potential’s Springtime School. “Our learners have had to be flexible and we’ve added to their programming to help them along. We’re working on things like tolerating mask wearing and recognizing signs that they will see

out in the community such as social distance markers and one-way signs. We’ve also increased their independence by having them help with cleaning and wiping down materials. Hygiene and self-help have always been part of our programming, but it’s even more important now.”



Anthony works with Potential RBT Nancy Hourmouzis to complete a puzzle.

In addition to onsite learning, Werner says the staff has become creative with social skills training that used to take place out in the community. “We’re using Zoom and GoToMeetings™ to provide students and parents with support and training within the home,” she explains. “Because of COVID, skills that were initially taught in the school and community settings have been modified so they can be taught in the home by parents. Our learners have done really well adapting to everything.”

“It’s always taken a village to raise a child, but the pandemic has really highlighted that need for a partnership between us, our families, and our donors,” adds Werner. “We’re dependent on each other to make sure we can teach and provide services that our clients and students rely on in a safe environment.”

## Potential Adapts to Provide Top-Notch Training

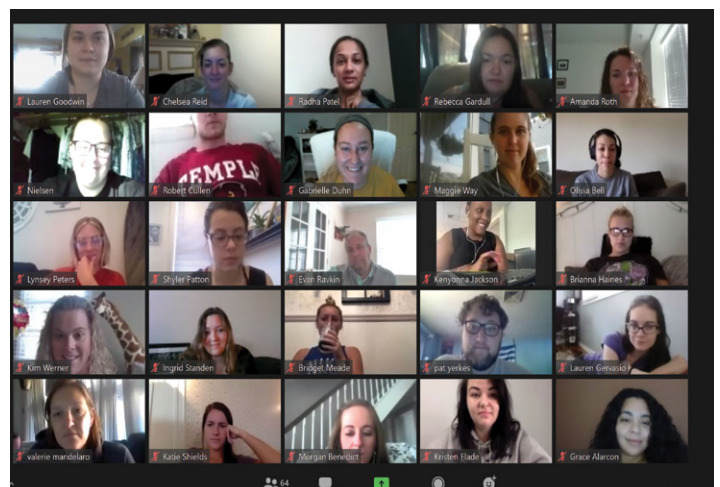
For three days in August, Potential suspended client services in order to hold company-wide staff training. With safety in mind, most training sessions were held via Zoom. Safe Crisis Management (SCM) was the only in-person training session due to the need for hands-on instruction.

Large group training was done for topics such as HIPAA compliance, blood borne pathogens, and COVID response. Smaller breakout sessions were held by individual teams.

The Operations team spent time on advanced Microsoft Office training, learning about the clinical purpose of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and gathering a better understanding of individuals with ABA since they do not directly interact with Potential’s client population.

RBTs covered job-specific training through the AFIRM modules focusing on safely de-escalating problem behaviors and promoting communication in our learners.

Program Coordinators spent their time on the latest training and supervision topics to support the RBTs. Additionally, they learned more about how to incorporate developmentally appropriate practices into play and social learning.



Eighty staff members took part in Potential’s three-day virtual training “week” in August.

Although training was a little different this year, we were able to use some cutting-edge techniques to successfully adapt to circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and provide top-notch training to all 80 employees.





## Welcome to Our Team!

Please join Potential in welcoming the following staff members who joined our team this past summer:

- » Theresa Chancey
- » Donata Conover
- » Jenna D'Entremont
- » Rick Effing
- » Kaitlyn McFadden
- » Jillian Stokes
- » Maiya Tasaico
- » Elizabeth Velez
- » Sara Wieschedel
- » Rachel Zbarsky

## Help Us Empower Our Clients—Help Us Buy the Bus

If you think our Buy the Bus campaign is about convenience, think again.

A dedicated bus means we can provide the many children and adults we serve with increased access to a new world of opportunity. It's a fact to which Kristin, a Potential parent, can certainly attest.

"I always wanted Johnny to be exposed to social settings, but I was so scared of what others would think," says Kristin. She shares that before coming to Potential, Johnny—who is non-verbal—couldn't communicate and would run away in uncomfortable settings. "Going on outings with his Potential teachers has made a huge impact on both of us," Kristin explains. "Now we can go to the mall and walk around together. He even stops and waits for me if he walks too far ahead."

"If I had the money, I would buy the bus for Potential myself," she adds enthusiastically. "These children and adults need these outings. They need exposure to the world. They need to be treated equally. That's all I want for them."

Through field trips, community events and other therapeutic skill-based outings, our clients gain social skills, a sense of independence and exposure to opportunities and environments they might not otherwise encounter.

But buying a bus is expensive and to date, we've raised \$22k toward our \$50K goal. **Your help is urgently needed to make this dream a reality for our clients. Won't you please consider making a tax-deductible donation at <https://tinyurl.com/buythebus>?**

With your support, countless others in our community can realize the independence that Kristin and Johnny now enjoy. Please be a difference maker for these families and contribute to our Buy the Bus campaign today.



## Get Groovy with Us on Oct. 16

We're just days away from our virtual "Saturday Night Fever" gala and it's sure to be a way-out time!

In addition to remarks from our Founder and CEO Kristine Quinby, Pa State Representative Wendi Thomas, and a few other special guests, highlights include:

- » Recognition of this year's winners of our Volunteer and ACE Awards
- » A special video appeal for our "Buy the Bus" campaign and the opportunity to give in real-time
- » The opportunity to bid on some amazing silent auction items (via a virtual platform)
- » A costume contest with prizes for the best dressed of the 70's and other categories

- Show your Eagle pride, add this signed helmet to your Eagle memorabilia collection. Signed by several of the 2019-2020 Eagles team members including Carson Wentz. Go Birds!



While there are certainly downsides to a virtual event, one positive is that it costs less to produce. This means that 100% of the proceeds from this year's event will be directly applied to our Buy the Bus campaign. We hope that you'll support our organization, staff, and participants by joining us on Friday, October 16 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Advanced registration is required and admission to our virtual event is free. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/Potential-Gala> for more information or to register.

Please be sure to also follow us on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram** to take part in contests, see pictures of auction items before they go live, and stay abreast of the latest news and stories from our organization.

- Got a totally disco outfit? Lay it on us and you might win a prize during our best dressed of the 70's costume contest!





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## Promoting Our People

At Potential, we believe in helping our staff realize their professional goals and are committed to promoting hard working, qualified team members to positions of responsibility. Please join us in congratulating the following individuals who embody this pledge:

► **Hillary Sawyer** has been named Donor Relationship Manager. In this role she will be responsible for attracting donors and keeping them engaged with our organization



▲ **Amanda Roth, BCBA**, has been promoted to Lead PC



▲ **Holly Cunningham**, has been named Quality Assurance Coordinator



▲ **Shyler Patton, BCBA**, and **Chloe Mirande, BCBA**, have both been promoted to the role of Program Coordinator



## ASAT Compiles List of Apps for Parents and Teachers

Potential and the Association for Science in Autism Treatment have worked together to compile a non-exhaustive list of apps for parents and teachers. This list can be found at <https://asatonline.org/for-parents/list-of-apps/> and may have some value in teaching new skills, promoting application of existing skills, addressing challenging behavior, and connecting parents with support systems to get through this unprecedented time. A heartfelt thank you to our own Karen Yosmanovich, Clinical Manager, who took the lead for Potential.



## Save the Date

### October

16 Virtual Saturday Night Fever Gala

### November

26 Closed for Thanksgiving  
27 Closed for Black Friday