

Potential Perspectives

FALL 2021

Potential's Springtime School Enrollment Swells as a Result of Individualized Approach

Across the region, students, parents, and teachers are celebrating the return to school. It's a feeling we share here at Potential, where our Springtime School is poised to welcome the largest class of students ever. In fact, since January, enrollment in the school has more than doubled. This is a trend that appears to be linked to the adoption of remote and hybrid learning models by area school districts for much, if not all, of the 2020-21 academic year.

In a survey conducted earlier this year, more than 97% of the 1,000 educators polled reported seeing some learning loss in their students over the past year, and 57% estimated their students were behind by more than three months in their social-emotional progress.

Other research indicates that minority students and those with disabilities have experienced the greatest setbacks.

When Potential's Springtime School was forced to close in March 2020, "we provided parent training rather than expecting our students to learn from sitting in front of a computer screen," says Rachel Landers, M.Ed., BCBA, Lead Teacher at the school. "In a few special cases, we arranged to have staff work one-on-one with students in their homes, taking the necessary precautions. We did everything within our means to prevent our students from developing more severe behaviors."

The school implemented extensive health and safety protocols to reopen in July 2020, and resume in-person learning. Every new and returning student since that time has undergone functional skills and academic assessments to establish their personal starting point.

"I think that's really the biggest difference between the Springtime School and most public schools, and why our enrollment has swelled: We meet each student where they are, whereas public schools are bound to their curricula,"

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Lead Teacher
Rachel Landers is among the several professionals helping to meet the needs of students at Potential's Springtime School.



A MESSAGE FROM KRISTINE

Fall is here and with it comes the excitement of a new season and school year. Here at Potential, we're kicking things off with our highest ever enrollment in the Springtime School (see cover story).

On behalf of our teachers and staff, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our students and their families! We hope you have a great year.



Keeping with the theme of growth, we are preparing to open our second Center in Warminster and recently hosted a preview night for our donors (see page 3). A larger grand opening and ribbon cutting event for clients, families, and the community ~~will take place~~ October 19. We are actively hiring for this location and look forward to welcoming clients soon.

Another exciting thing to share is that our 5th Annual Car Show for Autism took place on Oct. 2. Thank you so much to our planning committee, sponsors, vendors, exhibitors, volunteers, and guests for making this event a success. Your support brings us one step closer to ending the wait list for quality autism services in our region.

While there are many very good things to celebrate, we do have to recognize that September had its challenges. In addition to the ever-present specter of COVID—which we continue to guard against with masking and other precautions—flooding brought on by Hurricane Ida threw an unexpected wrench into the start of the fall season. Thank you to everyone who donated or helped us clean up our basement.

Looking ahead, we'll be launching our end-of-year appeal in November with the goal of ending the wait list. Please keep an eye on your mailbox for more information!

Wishing you a happy and festive fall!

Kristine Quinby

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

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Landers says. "All of our teaching is dictated by our students' specific needs."

She says the measures are meant not only to put students in the best possible position to learn but also to help them adapt to a world that looks very different from the one they were becoming more comfortable in only 18 months ago.

"For example, many of our students couldn't tolerate wearing masks when they returned to the classroom," Landers says. "So we've been systematically increasing their time spent wearing them."

When many students are struggling to keep up, the Springtime School is working to ensure that none of its students are left behind.



Alex is among the many students benefiting from the Springtime School's individualized approach.

Potential's Bright Yellow Bus Rolls into Town

It may not be a magic bus, but it sure is beautiful! In mid-August, a long-awaited dream became a reality when Potential took delivery of its new bus. The vehicle, a brilliant yellow 2021 Ford transit van, holds 10 passengers (a driver plus nine clients or students) and will make outings into the community far easier.

The bus is the result of a year-long capital campaign supported by client families, friends of Potential, and members of the community. These included Foundations Community Partnership (FCP) whose grant helped push the fund-raising effort over its \$50K goal line.

"FCP is a behavioral health and human services organizations that awards grants," says Tobi Bruhn, Ed.D, CFRE, Executive Director of FCP. "We've had a long relationship with Potential and knew this

bus would meet a great need for their clients and the community."

He shares that it was the goals Potential had for the bus that really impressed FCP. "This effort creates an opportunity for their clients to gain independence through the acquisition of valuable skills that they could refine in a community settings. It just made sense to us."

Another thing FCP liked about this funding opportunity was that it helps to overcome a transportation barrier in the community. "We're thrilled to have been able to play a small part in making this project happen."

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who donated to our Buy the Bus campaign and made this acquisition possible. We couldn't have done it without you!



Tobi Bruhn of Foundations Community Partnership, joins Potential's Hillary Sawyer and Kristine Quinby for a photo op with the new bus his organization helped fund.



Potential staff spent several days in August learning and having fun during training week.

And That's a Wrap!

Training week is an annual tradition at Potential that blends education with fun. And this year was no different. During the week of August 20th, staff engaged in a curriculum that focused on compassionate care for themselves and others. They learned about stress management techniques, journaling, and guided meditation. Staff also participated in a social interaction activity that encouraged them to think outside the box. A highlight of the curriculum was the creation of a collage now on display in the art room.

Other trainings focused on blood borne pathogens and HIPAA compliance, safe crisis management, the new Captivate text messaging program, and first aid skills.

Additionally, staff participated in a live watch party on Facebook with thought leader Gregory Hanley, PhD, BCBA-D, a research professor at Western New England University and the creator of practical functional assessment. During the event Dr. Hanley even gave Potential a shout out!

Discussions around Potential's strategic plan, our values, and the new tuition discount program rounded out the event. All sessions were planned and led by staff. A special thank you to everyone who stepped up and facilitated training throughout the week!

Tuition Discounts Available for Potential Staff

Potential is pleased to share that through agreements with Felician University, Rider University, and St. Joseph's University, employees may now take advantage of tuition discounts on undergraduate and graduate programs and certificate offerings. This is just one more way we're working to make Potential a great place to work!



Expanding Our Reach to Philadelphia

Community Behavioral Health (CBH) recently announced that Potential is now approved as an in-network Medicaid provider for its clients in Philadelphia County. Not only will clients from this region no longer have to pay out-of-pocket costs or co-pays for our services, but this approval also opens access to additional funding opportunities for our organization. With this expansion, Potential will now be hiring for roles based in Philadelphia. Learn more at potentialinc.org/careers

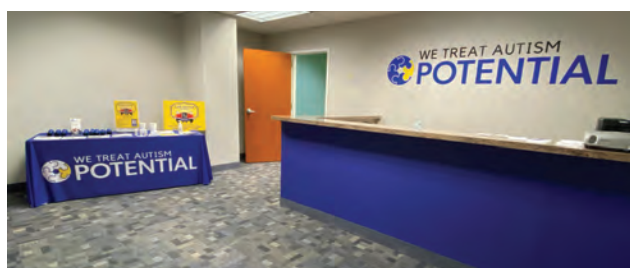


Donors Enjoy Sneak Preview of Potential's New Site

More than a dozen of Potential's supporters took time out of their evening on Sept. 22 to tour Potential's new Warminster location and hear about our vision for the future. The event featured comments from Potential donor and family member Steve Grumann, Founder and CEO Kristine Quinby, Board President Jason Yager, and Donor Relationship Manager Hillary Sawyer.



Potential's Hillary Sawyer takes a moment to thank donors while Kristine Quinby looks on.



The large, welcoming lobby is just one of the great features of Potential's new site.



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What Makes a Good Behavior Technician?

Evan Ravkin, Potential's Talent Acquisition Coordinator, shares some insight into what he looks for in a registered behavior technician.

Let's start with the easier-to-define stuff. Training and experience-wise, what are the benchmarks you look for in a behavior technician?

Evan: Our candidates come from all walks, including outside of the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA), so I don't want to exclude anyone. For many, this position is their entrance to ABA.

Then a more inclusive question to ask is, are there certain qualities that distinguish a candidate in your eyes?

Evan: Yes, definitely. They tend to be very organized and excellent at time management. Many have a psychology or education degree, but they also have an interest in science, or they're data-driven. They're also very good at building rapport. And they're compassionate. Many know someone who's on the spectrum, whether it's a friend or a relative, and they became their impetus for pursuing the profession.

Where a behavior technician is concerned, what are the benefits of working at Potential?

Evan: It really starts with Kristine Quinby, our Founder, President, and CEO. She fosters an open, personable environment. She also respects everyone and the work they do, and she ensures that her staff does the same. As an extension of that, Kristine also prioritizes self-care and maintaining a work-life balance.

We also do several things that are unique for the industry. For example, all our full-time staff are salaried. That way, no one loses income when a client cancels.

Is there potential for growth with the position?

Evan: There's ample opportunity in many directions. Between Potential and the Springtime School, a behavior technician is exposed to a lot of different roles within ABA. It's a field with many opportunities, and Potential functions as a kind of incubator in that regard.



Evan Ravkin is helping to lead Potential's recruitment charge.