



an update for *friends* of Meeting Street

SPRING 2011

# HANDS ON!

## A Traumatic Beginning

### A Lifetime of Love

By *Nick's Mom*

For nine long and exhausting months, my husband Carl and I anxiously awaited the birth of our second son, Nicholas Anthony. Our two-year old son, Kyle, was as anxious as we were. He was going to be the best big brother ever. Kyle loved to lay his head on my belly and talk to his brother. All of us were so excited and could not wait for our new baby. We never thought in a million years that when the day came, it would change our lives forever. And at times during his early life, it was hard to believe that Nicholas would ever be the happy third grader that he is today.

When Nicholas was born, he was a healthy 8 lbs, 13 ounces; however, due to complications surrounding his birth, Nick had a traumatic start to his life. At birth his head was swollen with fluids, and the size of a youth-sized basketball. His breathing was irregular and he was fighting an infection. Then the seizures began. I later found out that Nick had a stroke, which caused brain damage. During his first year, his pediatrician diagnosed Nicholas with Cerebral

Palsy and Global Developmental Delay. The doctor referred us to Meeting Street Early Intervention.

From the beginning, I knew that Meeting Street was the perfect place for Nick and our family. Early Intervention provided Nicholas everything he needed including medical equipment and therapies. They took the time to provide emotional support to everyone in our family. While in Early Intervention, Nick had speech, occupational and physical therapy every week and Meeting Street always coordinated it around our family's schedule.

When Nicholas turned three, he started school at Meeting Street and he is now in The Grace School inclusive third grade class. At 10-years-old, he is thriving. He is walking with the assistance of a walker, speaks sign language fluently, is always smiling and participates in all class activities. The teachers and therapists at Meeting Street have changed his life. They focus on what Nicholas can do and celebrate his successes every day. Nicholas Anthony is the happiest, most motivated, and most loving child I have ever seen. He has become this child because he has a brother, parents, and professionals at Meeting Street who truly believe in him.

**Meeting Street Services:**  
PT, OT, Speech, Education - The Grace School

**Time at Meeting Street:**  
7 Years

**Challenges:**  
Cerebral Palsy, seizure disorder, developmental delays

**Milestones:**  
Improved communication – use of words, facial expressions, manual signs

**Nick's Personality:**  
Adorable, friendly, outgoing, very active

**What he enjoys most:**  
Playing outside and visiting friends and staff around the building

### Nick

Age: 10 years old, 3rd Grade in The Grace School



Nick takes a break from working on his communication signs to smile for the camera.



Meeting Street



## Kayla's Story

### A Pretty Face and So Much More

The classroom brightens when Kayla enters it. At 17-years-old, her brilliant smile and sunny disposition make every day more enjoyable for her classmates and the professionals in her tenth grade class at The Carter School. For more than eleven years, Kayla has been coming to Meeting Street, eager to learn and ready to take on new challenges.

"Having Kayla in our classroom is great for everyone. She has an amazing attitude and the best disposition of anyone I know. She is always in a good mood and is always ready to participate in classroom activities," comments her teacher, Jane DeMelo. "Kayla is very alert and very perceptive. She understands what is going on and loves to be part of it."

This year Kayla has improved her communications skills and now uses visual supports to answer questions. When given a choice, she can point to the correct response and she can easily communicate yes or no with a nod of her head.

Kayla is an active participant in the life skills activities that are the focus of her curriculum in The Carter School. She is learning cooking skills and actively participates in the paper shredding services that the students provide for the building. And she helps her classmates with recycling, even though this is not her favorite project.

Kayla is much happier preparing and pricing products for fundraising activities to support Carter School events. One of Kayla's favorite events is the annual Carter School Prom. Each year she looks forward to the Prom and gets all dressed up for it – lots of frills, lots of ribbons, lots of flowers.

## Kayla

Age: 17, 10th Grade in The Carter School



One of Kayla's favorite activities is attending the Prom each year.

**Meeting Street Services:**  
Special Education - The Carter School

**Time at Meeting Street:**  
11 Years

**Challenges:**  
Cerebral Palsy

**Milestones:**  
Using visuals to respond to questions

**Kayla's Personality:**  
Easygoing, great sense of humor, patient, very perceptive

**What she enjoys most:**  
Socializing with classmates, pricing products for sale in life skills, shopping with her family

## MEETING STREET HAS JOB OPENINGS!

As Meeting Street continues to grow and thrive, we continue to have great job opportunities! There are rewarding positions available for Mental Health Clinicians, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists and many other professionals.

People who work at Meeting Street love it because they know their work changes the lives of children and families every day. Employees also receive incredible benefits, generous paid time-off, and the chance to work with other high quality professionals. Every day is a learning experience!

**For more information on our current job openings, please go to [meetingstreet.org](http://meetingstreet.org)**

# Meeting Street's Olneyville Early Childhood Initiative

For 65 years, Meeting Street has been committed to the healthy development and education of children of all abilities. Building on its long history of early childhood development expertise, Meeting Street plans to create a continuum of services that will ensure that Providence's children enter Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. The Olneyville Early Childhood Initiative marks the launch of this exciting endeavor.

Meeting Street kicked off the Olneyville Early Childhood Initiative on Monday, March 7th at the William D'Abate Elementary School in Providence. Local leaders were on hand including Senator Jack Reed, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman James Langevin, Mayor Angel Taveras, Councilman Correia and Councilwoman Matos. The Initiative is made possible by the support of our Congressional Delegation; in particular, the leadership of Senator Reed and Congressman Langevin, who requested and received \$900,000 in Congressional funding.



Meeting Street's Olneyville Early Childhood Initiative is unique because it will provide children and families with a wide range of support and services that will be delivered in their neighborhood and in their homes. Children enrolled in the program will receive health screenings and assessments, early education, and therapeutic services. Families will also receive parent training, nutritional counseling, mental health support, prenatal education, and access to social services. A key element of the initiative is the longitudinal tracking system that will link early childhood investments to school readiness. All of this will help us achieve our **vision of being a national leader in child development, education, research and training.**

## THANK YOU For Making The 2011 Telethon The Most Successful Ever!

Meeting Street thanks all of the sponsors, volunteers, and donors who made the 2011 Telethon such a success. This year's 35th Annual Telethon was the most successful ever! Special thanks to **Nick, Ron, and Pete** of **Cardi's Furniture**, and **WPRI-12**, our presenting sponsors, along with Telethon Honorary Chairs **Curt and Shonda Schilling**.

Meeting Street also thanks **Citizens Bank**, the Telethon online auction sponsor, as well as our half-hour sponsors: **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island** and **The Amica Insurance Company**

### Thanks also to:

Coastway Community Bank: Technology Sponsor  
Bank RI: Behind the Scenes Sponsor  
Twin Oaks Restaurant: Hospitality Sponsor  
Dunkin' Donuts: Beverage Sponsor  
White, Carlin & Kelly: T-Shirt Sponsor  
Creative Impressions: Party Bag Sponsor  
Mabbett & Associates: Ice Sculpture Sponsor



### And our Phone Bank Sponsors:

BNY Mellon  
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The Washington Trust Company  
Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DeRienzo  
Starkweather & Shepley  
Cox Business  
The Providence Journal





## Get Up and MOVE!

Meeting Street has long been a pioneer in therapy and education. That is why we are proud to be incorporating the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) curriculum into our classrooms. "Movement is the primary foundation of learning, and this curriculum allows students to work on therapy within their natural classroom setting. Students don't even realize it's therapy," explains Tamara Sylvestre, Meeting Street Physical Therapist.



MOVE began in California and is based on getting kids up and moving in class. You don't have to be in a therapy session to be working on mobility. Thanks to a Quality of Life grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, Meeting Street is now the only school in New England using the MOVE curriculum. Staff from Meeting Street were trained and certified in the MOVE curriculum and they brought it back to their colleagues. "What's unique about MOVE is that each student's goals are determined by the students, parents, and therapists together. We find out what is important to the child and their family and work toward meeting those goals, whether it is going to church or just giving mom a hug, comments Sylvestre."



*The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation aids in providing more opportunities, access, and daily quality of life for individuals living with paralysis; their families; and caregivers. The Reeve Foundation grant will help pay for equipment to support our MOVE program. Thank you!*



### Chinese New Year

On February 18, our Grace School students participated in a Chinese New Year Celebration. The celebration included a lantern procession, Chinese Ribbon Dance, readings about the significance of Chinese New Year, dancing, and the sharing of traditional foods. The celebration was the culmination of the students' hard work and effort after learning about Asian culture and the Chinese New Year.



### Curt & Shonda Schilling Visit Classrooms

In preparation for this year's Telethon, Honorary Chairs Curt and Shonda Schilling took some time visiting classrooms throughout The Grace and Carter Schools. Both the students and Curt and Shonda enjoyed spending time with each other as they read and worked on art projects.



### Recycle to the Max

In the pursuit of being greener at Meeting Street, The Grace and Carter School students heard an interactive GREEN presentation by MaxMan from the RI Resource Recovery Corporation. Students learned the importance of recycling and being green and how it affects our world.



### A Nice Treat!

Meeting Street had a great visit with Greg Tetrault, Jr and Adam Fugere from Dunkin' Donuts! They got to see our Preschoolers create dramatic play environments with fun products donated by Dunkin' Donuts. Dunkin' Donuts was also generous to donate the final funding needed to purchase a new device, the Logan Prox Talker, to help our students with their communication skills.

# Meeting Street Happenings

Join us for these events, help us raise funds, and have a great time doing it. For more information on upcoming events, visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org). Mark your calendar!

## Meeting Street has been named The National Institute of Mental Health Outreach Partner for Rhode Island

Meeting Street will support the NIMH goal of delivering science-based mental health information to communities throughout Rhode Island. Meeting Street joins a nationwide network of 55 mental health organizations that disseminate research from NIMH about the causes, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental disorders. Meeting Street will also work with NIMH to promote public involvement in their research studies. Meeting Street is honored to partner with The National Institute of Mental Health and looks forward to supporting the needs of families throughout Rhode Island.



## Shonda Schilling Speaking Engagement

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, Meeting Street hosted a speaking engagement by Shonda Schilling on April 5th. Shonda is the author of The New York Times bestseller, *The Best Kind of Different: Our Family's Journey with Asperger's Syndrome*. During the 90-minute event, Shonda discussed her book, her family's struggles and successes, and answered questions. The audience of over 200 people offered rave reviews and connected with Shonda and her family's journey with Asperger's. Special thanks to **Cardi's Furniture** for sponsoring a podcast of this event. If you couldn't attend, you can view the podcast at [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org)

## Saucony & Running for Good

Meeting Street is proud to announce we have been awarded a grant from Saucony. The funds will build and support our ongoing efforts to encourage all kids to run and move, through the creation of an after school Run for Good Club. Two afternoons each week, students can remain after school, have a healthy snack and participate in a running club under the direction of our Adaptive Physical Education teacher. Depending on the time of year and weather, the Run for Good Club will be held in our gymnasium or on our artificial turf youth soccer field. Grant funds will support the purchase and adoption of the Fitness for Life health and fitness curriculum that we will adopt school-wide. Finally, Saucony will support the purchase of t-shirts for all 150 participants.

### UPCOMING MEETING STREET EVENTS

#### MAY

- 3 May Breakfast – 65th Anniversary Celebration
- 21 Meeting Street Walk & Family Fair
- 26 The Carter School Prom
- 5/31-6/3 Science Fair

#### JUNE

- 17 Meeting Street Graduation

### UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

#### MAY

- 30 3rd Anniversary Memorial Bike Run at Rosario Society, 17 Rosario Drive, Providence, RI. In Memory of Brad and Rosie (Sabitoni) Randall  
*For more information please contact Emo Sabitoni at 401-230-4357 or Maureen Sabitoni at 401-946-1116*

#### JUNE

- 19-21 CVS Caremark Charity Classic Golf Tournament Rhode Island Country Club in Barrington  
*To volunteer or for more information please contact Sharon Allsworth at 401-533-9229 or [sallsworth@meetingstreet.org](mailto:sallsworth@meetingstreet.org)*
- 29 The 30th Annual Allstate and Bay Realty Cocktail Party to benefit Meeting Street. The Coast Guard House Restaurant in Narragansett 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
*For more information please contact Aimee Harvey at 401-533-9230 or [aharvey@meetingstreet.org](mailto:aharvey@meetingstreet.org)*

#### OCTOBER

- 17 2011 Meeting Street Golf Tournament at TPC Boston in Norton, MA  
*For more information please contact Aimee Harvey at 401-533-9230 or [aharvey@meetingstreet.org](mailto:aharvey@meetingstreet.org)*

# Join the Fun!

Saturday, May 21, 2011

## The Meeting Street Walk & Family Fair

### WALK

Distance: 2 miles

Location: Meeting Street Soccer Field

Registration: at 9:30 am

Registration Fee: \$15 for individuals, Children under 12 Free

Walk begins: at 10:00 am

Everyone who registers gets a T-Shirt and is eligible for fantastic prizes!

To sign up or for more information visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org)

or contact Aimee Harvey at 401-533-9230



### FAMILY FAIR

FREE Celebration for the families of Providence & Meeting Street

The Meeting Street Family Fair includes Music, Zoomobile, Arts & Crafts, Free Food, Balloon Art, Fun & Games, & much more!

For more information please visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org)

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor



## Help! Every Donation Counts

Every donation makes a difference in supporting Meeting Street and our students. Especially with major state budget cuts and hard economic times, every dollar matters. Meeting Street is proud that close to 90 cents of every dollar goes directly to support children and families. Please consider a donation today. Below are some examples of what your generosity means to Meeting Street.

*Thank you for your support!*

**\$25** – Adaptive art supplies for a classroom project

**\$50** – CD books for our library collection

**\$100** – Alterations to a bike that lets a child with special needs ride with his friends

**\$250** – Help send 8 students for one week of Hippotherapy (therapeutic horseback riding)

**\$500** – Communication instrument to help a non-verbal child express his or her emotions, thoughts, and just talk with his/her friends

## Meeting Street is on Facebook!



and we want you to become one of our fans! Join us today!

## Sign Up for Meeting Street's Online Community!

- Sign up for e-news
- Make a gift
- View your donation history
- View upcoming events

## Email Connections

Meeting Street wants to share our news with you via email. It makes it easier to send you quick updates. It saves the agency money, and it saves trees! Please send your email to: [jcanole@meetingstreet.org](mailto:jcanole@meetingstreet.org).

*Don't worry....we won't bombard you with information – just news you can use.*

## HANDS ON!

Hands On! is published to keep in touch with friends of Meeting Street. Each issue highlights our services, support and activities, and celebrates the accomplishments of the children, young adults and families we serve. Forward your comments and suggestions to: John Canole, editor, at 401-533-9238 or email him at [jcanole@meetingstreet.org](mailto:jcanole@meetingstreet.org).