

SibNews

News for and about siblings of people with disabilities
December 2020-February 2021

Calendar emerges

Looking forward to 2021.

Young Sibs Connect

Young siblings attending Sibshops express gratitude.

Siblings Voice Hope

Siblings share stories about their experiences that give them hope.

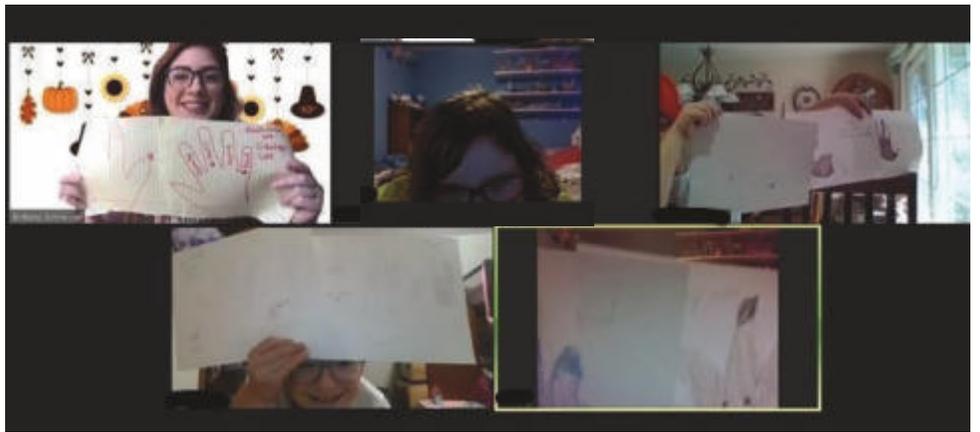
Young Sibs Connect

Even during a pandemic young sibs share “Thank-y Things in Sibshops

Never underestimate the depth of thinking of young WisconSibs. Our November Sibshops explored sibling gratitude with the theme “Thank-y Things”. Expressing gratitude is key to resiliency and well-being.

The kids attending Sibshop, some for the very first time, were full of energy and nerves. Some were pros with using Zoom, but most were not altogether sure and had questions. Will it be like school? Will I feel weird? Will I feel I belong? Will it be boring? Right away, they got their questions answered and relaxed. This wasn’t school. This was something just for kids like them. This was fun.

With paper and markers Brittany, our WisconSibs Youth Coordinator, got them creating two hand “Thanky Turkeys”, tracing around their hands and decorating each finger like turkey feathers. Then she asked “What are you thankful for?”. The children shyly responded with typical answers, “family, friends, food.”



babysitter.” “I’m thankful for my brother.” “I’m thankful for making my own choices.” And these: “the Revolutionary War”, “TV”, “Sib Camp”, “Sibshop”, “animals”, “my own space”, “my daddy”, “Doctor

Another sib smiled and said, “I think my brother would be thankful for ME!”

Who” (yes, these are kids ages 6-8)! Now for the other turkey, the one that represented their siblings with disabilities. Brittany asked, “What do you think your sibling with disabilities may be thankful for?” The Sibs took a few moments to think about that, but soon a Sib popped up and exclaimed “STRAWBERRIES! My sister loves strawberries. When we went strawberry picking, I think she thought she was in Strawberry Heaven.”

Another sibling squealed, “Dolphins! The only movie she wants to watch is ‘Dolphin Tale’. She’s thankful for dolphins.” Another sib smiled and said, “I think my brother would be thankful for ME!”

How do you know someone is thankful? The answers came quickly “we hug each other”, “we play together”, “we help each other”.

Future Sibshops; A Big Dill

Just like pickles, sibs experience sweet moments in life, sour ones, and some that feel like no big “dill”.



We’re going to have fun in 2021 Sibshops exploring all kinds of “pickles” siblings can find themselves in. We look forward to siblings ages 6-12 joining us virtually or in person. Check the calendar in this newsletter or visit wisconsibs.org

COVER PHOTO: Tori, a 6-year-old sib from Casco, WI attended her first WisconSibs Sibshop in October. She couldn’t wait to tell her brother Olilie all about it and show him her “What About Me?” bag she made.



Brittany Schneider, WisconSibs Youth Coordinator, leads both virtual and in-person Sibshops. She has over 9 years

of experience working with families and individuals affected by developmental and cognitive disabilities and has spent most of her time working with individuals on the autism spectrum. Contact her at Brittany@wisconsibs.org



Brittany “hands” out supplies using long tongs. In-person Sibshops held at the Building for Kids provides plenty of room for safety.

As they became more involved in coloring the first turkey representing themselves, they eagerly jumped in with: “I’m thankful for my new



Mulligatawny Soup

6-8 servings

It may have a strange name, but trust us when we say this soup is delicious! Don't let the curry powder scare you away; this soup isn't spicy at all, has a wonderful flavor and vibrant color, and is easy and quick to make.

*As written, this soup is **free of the Top 8 allergens**, and is also garlic and onion free. Substitute 1 3/4 c. half and half for the coconut milk if you can tolerate dairy! To make this soup vegan, simply swap in vegetable broth for the chicken broth and a drained can of garbanzo beans for the meat.*

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
- 3 celery stalks, diced
- 4 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 tsp. mild curry powder
- 1/2 tsp. garam masala spice blend (optional)
- 4 c. chicken or turkey broth
- 3/4 c. uncooked white long-grain or jasmine rice
- Water for rice (as indicated on your rice package)
- 1 large tart apple, peeled and diced
- 2 c. leftover cooked and diced chicken or turkey
- 1 (13.5 oz.) can full-fat coconut milk
- 1 c. frozen green peas
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Lemon wedges and cilantro for serving (optional)

Instructions:

In a large Dutch oven, heat oil over medium high heat. Add diced celery and carrots, and saute until the vegetables have softened slightly but are not browned (about 3-5 minutes). To the pot add salt, curry powder, garam masala (if using), broth, and water needed for rice and bring mixture to a boil. Once the broth mixture is boiling, add rice, setting your kitchen timer for the time directed on the rice package.

When there are three minutes left on your timer, add the chicken/turkey and diced apple. When your timer goes off, add the can of coconut milk, green peas, brown sugar, and lemon juice. Cook for one additional minute to warm up the peas, then remove pot from the heat. Ladle into individual serving bowls and top with chopped cilantro and additional lemon juice if desired!

SibNews will be running a series of recipes submitted by WisconSib Kristin Lanari. Kristin has been creating allergen-friendly recipes for several years to address the needs of her family. You may know Kristin from her work as owner/photographer of Lanari Photography or her volunteer work with WisconSibs. Recently, Kristin was voted onto the Board of the Sibling Leadership Network as the co-chair of Chapter Development.



Find more recipes on Kristin's Instagram **Coffee Table Eats** @coffeetableeats

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Siblings Voice Hope



Thank you to the WisconSibs and supporters who recently shared their stories for our **Sibling Voices: Stories of Hope** campaign: Tessa Lewis, Randy Young; Edison and Jenni Eickelberg; Michael Stack, Lyla and Stephanie Streck; Eleanor and Charlotte Woelfel; Elise Oehler; Cherie Purdy; Lisa Schneider; and Cindy Piotrowski. Thank you also to Bill Jartz, WBAY Action 2 News and Allison Norlian, sibling and 3-time Emmy nominated journalist was our guest key note speaker. To see the presentation, go to YouTube and search [Sibling Voices: Stories of Hope](#).

By Stephenie Mlodzik

2020 has been a year like no other—a year where collaboration and connection with community champions who understand the needs of siblings has never been more important. We are extremely gratified by the support of our donors and funding partners.

Your tenacity and commitment to bringing WisconSibs virtual programs and services to as many siblings as possible is amazing. Simply put, if it wasn't for faithful supporters like you, we wouldn't exist. Your investment is making a positive impact on siblings and their family members with disabilities.

We would like to thank some of the recent grant contributors that make it possible to continue our mission.

- Anonymous Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region
- American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation
- Appleton Rotary Foundation
- Bader Philanthropies
- Covid-19 Community Response Fund-CFFVR and United Way
- Green Bay Packers Foundation
- Hortonville Area United Fund

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- The Ali Kuplic Memorial Fund and the Lloyd & Helen Mertz Endowment Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region

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Your gifts continue to inspire, encourage, and empower siblings of people with disabilities and their families every day. With grateful hearts, WisconSibs staff, board, and volunteers wish you and yours a safe, healthy, and happy Thanksgiving.

To make a donation visit our website and look for **DONATE**.

*Your gift could be matched. Check with your employer.



Stephenie is the WisconSibs Fund Development Coordinator. She is currently also serving as a member of the WI Board for People with Disabilities.

Contact her at Stephenie@wisconsibs.org.

Covid-19 May Have Slowed Us Down

But it hasn't stopped us

Be assured that we take the health and well-being of our community, siblings, and staff very seriously. Like you, we're closely monitoring the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people we care about most; our families and yours.

We have been redesigning programs and learning new ways of conducting business. The remains office closed as we're all working from our homes. We appreciate your patience. Our temporary office phone is 920-450-2609.

We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will follow guidance from public health officials and government agencies, so we can continue to support you and our communities as needed.

Let us know if there is something you need. We want to help.

WisconSibs staff and Board of Directors.

WisconSibs Staff & Board of Directors

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Brittany Schneider, Youth Coordinator
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We are currently seeking candidates for our Board of Directors, especially in communities beyond the Fox Valley. Send us an email if you'd like more information or an application. info@wisconsibs.org

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Calendar of Events

MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER, VISIT
WISCONSIBS.ORG OR
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All events are subject to change.

For kids ages 6-12 growing up with sisters and brothers with disabilities or long-term illnesses.



WisconSibs has been a registered provider of Sibshops for over 25 years

Winter/Spring 2021

ZOOM Sibshops

- Sat. Jan 9 at 10 AM
- Thurs. Jan 14 at 4 PM
- Thurs. Feb 4 at 4 PM
- Sat. Feb 13 at 10 AM
- Thurs. Mar 4 at 4 PM
- Sat. Mar 6 at 10 AM;
- Thurs. April 8 at 4 PM
- Sat. April 10 at 10 AM

REGISTER ONE TIME AND ATTEND AS MANY ZOOM SIBSHOPS AS YOU LIKE. EACH MONTH DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES.

IN-PERSON Sibshops

Building for Kids (limit 5 families)
 100 W. College, Appleton
 REGISTRATION REQUIRED.



The whole family chooses an exhibit to explore together. Sibs then gather with Brittany and other sibs for Sibshop half-way through.

- Sat. Feb 6 10:30 am—NOON
- Sat. April 17 10:30 am—NOON

Urban Air Park (limit 20 sibs)

4741 W Lawrence St, Grand Chute, WI
 REGISTRATION REQUIRED. This one is only for sibs. As part of Sibshop, sibs can play on the attractions of the park. The park will be limited to just our group.

Sat. Jan 23 9 AM—11 AM



Summer 2021 SibDays of Summer

Plamann Park
 1375 E Broadway Dr., Appleton

This day-camp style program gives siblings of children with disabilities an opportunity for some outdoor relaxation, games, crafts, swimming and much more. Sibs make friends and discover new ideas and information every day, Monday through Friday.

Mon-Fri, July 20-24 10 am—3 pm

Sib Camp - Door County

For siblings ages 9-16, Sib Camp is an opportunity for some respite, kick back, and experience the freedom and thrill of adventure. Sibs have a great time with peers who truly understand the ups and downs of life with siblings who have special needs.



Sib Camp activities include biking, hiking, swimming, paddling, zip lining, stargazing, camp cooking, campfires, ecology, photography, and much more!

Ages 9-14
 July 31 NOON—Aug 3 NOON
 Peninsula State Park—Tents

Ages 9-11
 Aug 12 NOON -15 NOON
 Wagon Trail — Yurts

Ages 12-16
 Aug 16 NOON -19 NOON
 Wagon Trail — Yurts

Fall 2021

Celebrate Sisterhood Red Lion Hotel, Appleton

15th Annual Celebrate Sisterhood fundraiser and "Show Your Purse-onality" auction and raffle.

Tuesday, October 19, 2021



Many more in person and online events and activities will be scheduled as we have more certainty about reopening. Safety will always be our top priority in determining when, where, and how programs are presented.

Special Siblings: A Grandmother's Perspective

Like siblings, grandparents often are overlooked. But siblings know grandparents are some of their greatest supporters and advocates.



By Deb Smet, Grandmother, WisconSibs volunteer



My oldest grandchild has cerebral palsy. He is 24 years old and can't speak, walk, or feed himself. He has the sweetest disposition and smiles easily. He giggles like crazy when he hears a fart or anything resembling a fart. He gets very upset when he thinks his little brother is getting hurt wrestling.

Logan has two sisters and a brother and they've never known life without a brother with a disability. When Logan had various surgeries, they went to grandma's or stayed behind with Dad. When he came home, he was front and center until his recovery was complete.

At a young age they learned how to feed him and give him a drink without spilling all over his shirt. At Christmas and birth-

days they take turns helping him open presents. They know what movies he likes and what video games are his favorite. They also get irritated with him just like they would with any big brother.

But here is what a grandmother observes. Logan's siblings are mature beyond their years. They are confident, aware, and adapt to change better than some adults. They understand medical terms and conditions more than most. They will be well prepared for adulthood because they have problem solved, adjusted on a dime, and have grown up knowing they are part of something much bigger and it isn't all about them.

I know it hasn't been easy for them but they'll be the first to tell you they've learned more from Logan than they've

taught him.

Logan will always be disabled and will always need help. And, no matter what that help looks like in the future, his siblings will be some of the most important people in his life. They haven't had it easy and sometimes they may feel sorry for themselves or complain, but then they move on. They will do great things – in fact, they already have.

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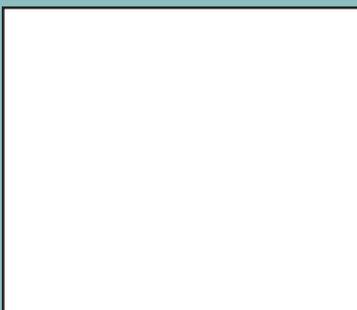


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- We are Wisconsin siblings of people with disabilities.
- We are role models to our siblings, our peers, our friends, and our community.
- We are caregivers and companions. Even the very youngest of us help care for our siblings with special needs.
- As we grow, we play a vital role in the quality of life of our siblings.

Celebration Still Merry and Bright

Seven out of 10 parents say Santa is an important part of their holiday tradition. With COVID, many families were concerned a visit with Santa may not happen, especially for their child with disabilities.



With COVID, many families were concerned a visit with Santa may not happen, especially for their child with disabilities.

But thanks to more than 75 volunteers, including Teen Sib Leaders and the Peer

Families strolled/rolled through Santa's Outdoor Courtyard, one family at a time, ending up at Santa's Sleigh for a family photo. While safely in their cars, elves entertained them before a visit from Santa, leaving with a goody bag and a cookie kit.



Thanks also to so many individuals loaning us their outdoor decorations making Santa's Celebration merry and bright.



Leader Group from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, we transformed the Grand Meridian into an outdoor wonderland and welcomed nearly 40 carloads of families to Santa Celebration.

Hosted by WisconSibs, Inc. this event is supported by the Appleton Rotary Foundation, Down Syndrome Association of WI, FamilyCaregiversRock.org, Lanari Photography, and donors like you. Thank



you to Kiwanian John Day for letting Santa borrow his sleigh and the Howard Thrivent Action Team.

