



The Leaflet

THE LETTUCE WORK FOUNDATION, INC.

Volume 1, Issue 1

June 2010

Growing Hope - by Lisa Wenzke



Lisa Wenzke is a Board Member and is the Secretary and Treasurer of Lettuce Work. Lisa is a Mathematics teacher at Oakstone Academy in Westerville and has an MBA from The Ohio State University.

Lettuce Work is an organization I am proud to be a part of. Working as a teacher of autistic students has made me realize that with the appropriate support, these young people can achieve

goals beyond what they or their families ever imagined.

Although schools are doing more to help these students, finding an appropriate work environment remains difficult. This alone can make planning for the future overwhelming to nearly impossible. This is where an organization like Lettuce Work is absolutely crucial to the future of these students and our communities.

Employing young adults with autism will allow my students to be welcomed into an environment that understands and can effectively manage their special needs. Lettuce Work will not only give them a chance to live a productive life, it will give them the best opportunity for a full life

with continuing education and a structured but social setting to build and maintain relationships.

In short, Lettuce Work gives these families what they need most--Hope.

Knowing I'm contributing to the future of my students is extremely rewarding as a volunteer and I look forward to the day our first group of young people are hired and serve as a reminder that anything is possible!



Inside this issue:

GROWING HOPE	1
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	2
AUTISM RALLY AT OHIO STATE HOUSE	2
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	3
A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF LETTUCE WORK	4

What is Autism?

Autism is one of many pervasive developmental disorders (PPDs) and is often referred to as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The autism spectrum refers to a group of developmental conditions affecting individuals that encompasses impairments and delays in social skills

and communication. All PPDs affect communication, behavior, cognitive, and social skills, but they are not all alike. Most PPDs are diagnosed by age 3.

Autism diagnoses are based on observation of behavior, not on medical tests. Delays in development of physical,

cognitive, social and emotional skills and language acquisition and use (or the achievement and then loss of developmental skills) are also hallmarks of autism.

Today, one out of every 100 children born will eventually be diagnosed with autism.



Kroger Community Rewards Program

It's not too late to register your Kroger Plus card and help Lettuce Work every time you shop at Kroger! Thanks to Kroger's Community Rewards program, local charities like Lettuce Work receive a donation from Kroger each quarter based on your purchases. The more you shop at Kroger, the more we receive — and there's no cost to you!

To register, go to the Kroger website www.kroger.com look for the Community Rewards program and select The Lettuce Work Foundation as your designated charity.

Each time you shop at Kroger, you'll be doing a good thing for Lettuce Work!



Our Heartfelt Thanks to our Donors

Our annual campaign was launched in April. All of us at Lettuce Work would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who made a contribution during our campaign. Your support provides us with the funds needed to continue to meet our operating expenses and build our Capital Campaign fund.

Giving Levels:

- **Future Harvest (Over \$5,000)**

The George & Lynn Ankney Fund of the Community Foundation of Collier County

- **Bumper Crop (\$2,500 to \$5,000)**

Barry & Betty Hunlock

Greg & Trish Adkins

Doug & Julie Sharp

- **Green Thumb (\$1,000 to \$2,499)**

Chris & Lisa Wenzke

Fred & Shirley Hendren

Mark & Lori Russell

The Buren Insurance Agency

- **Gardner's Helper (\$500 to \$999)**

Bob & Ann Holtsberry

Randy Montelone

- **Green Leaves (\$250 to \$499)**

Andrew & Anne Knox

Robert & Michelle Kozel

Robb & Susan Mitchell

- **Row of Seeds (Up to \$250)**

Doug & Christine Reader

Robert Fletcher

Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Durrett, Jr.

David & Sue Roark

Robert & Liesl Hartmann

Trimble Insurance Agency, Inc.

Stephen C. Wenzke, MD

Tom & Joan Welch

Beat Autism Now, Inc.

Mrs. D.C. Turley

Ms. Sarah Kurz

James & Mary Reinmann

Lyle & Linda Rhodebeck

Jerome & Nancy Wenzke

Nancy & Robert Crist

James & Patricia Blair

David & Harriet Gillies

Frank & Nancy Kurtz

Herb & Char Chamberlain

Sharon Hendren

Doug Smith

Rita Diane Almendinger

Terry & Connie Kelso

Michael & Claudia Fergang

Open House Magazine, Inc.

William Shorthill & Heidi Reed

John & Deborah Kish

David & Carolyn Abood

Molly Ann Reinmann

*Annual
Campaign
Plants Seeds
for our Future
Success*



Donate online at
www.lettucework.org

Autism Rally at the Ohio State House - by Alex Sawyers

On Wednesday, April 14, I had the honor of speaking at the sixth annual Autism Awareness Rally on the south lawn of the Ohio State Capitol in Columbus. There were a couple dozen vendors there relaying the message about autism awareness.

We opened with a moving rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” by a student of the Ohio School for the Blind. With several hundred supporters in attendance, I spoke about the need for more employment and vocational opportunities for adults with autism. These include organizations such as the Lettuce Work Foundation.



Alex Sawyers was a featured speaker at the recent Ohio Autism Rally held at the Ohio Statehouse.



Other speakers included local politicians speaking on behalf of House Bill 8, which would eliminate autism insurance discrimination in Ohio and the need for the autism assisted dog bill.

There was a sizable contingent from Oakstone Academy, a school for those with autism spectrum disorders. They spoke about how difficult it was for them socially in regular public schools, a path I travelled down many years ago. And wrapping up the festivities at the rally was a motivational speech by former Ohio State quarterback Stanley Jackson, who runs a football camp every summer for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Editor’s note—Alex did a fabulous job speaking at the rally. His comments about the need for additional support systems and programs to help adults on the autism spectrum were right

on target, and underscored the importance of programs such as Lettuce Work. Thank you so much Alex!

Capital Campaign

Some good friends of ours, one of whom is a pilot for American Airlines, took this photo shown on the bottom right while flying over our Lettuce Work property located near New Albany. It’s a great shot of our acreage...the only problem is...where are all the greenhouses?

Thanks to a generous donation, Lettuce Work has acreage waiting for us to build our buildings and start our training and employment programs. To do that however, will take a large capital investment in structures and systems so we can make Lettuce Work a reality.

Over the next two years, our goal is to raise about \$3 million to build Lettuce Work and begin providing services. In the meantime, we are contacting our state legislators, charitable foundations, and many individuals to share our story and ask for their financial support of our project.

The Lettuce Work model is compelling. We know that over 80% of adults with autism are unemployed, and many are living on social programs that taxpayers are funding. With recent the surge in autism, our ability as taxpayers to continue to fund these support programs, which include Medicaid and Social Security disability, is already being strained.

Lettuce Work is essentially self-supporting once it starts. The revenue generated from the greenhouses will be used to fund the programs and training necessary for our autistic associates. This model provides much needed relief to taxpayers and community support programs, but most importantly, provides meaningful employment and hope for our autistic adults living in our community.

Please help us fund the program to make a lasting and meaningful impact in your community. If you would like to help with our Capital Campaign or talk with someone about making a gift, please contact Doug Sharp by calling 614-893-8029 or by email at Doug.Sharp@lettucework.org. The Lettuce Work Foundation, Inc. is a 501c3 public charity.

We need your help to realize our vision.





Harvesting Hope for Adults with Autism

THE LETTUCE WORK FOUNDATION, INC.

P.O. Box 217
New Albany, Ohio 43054

(614) 893-8029
Doug.Sharp@lettucework.org
www.lettucework.org

You can help individuals with autism by donating online using our secure server at www.lettucework.org

A Message from the Head of Lettuce Work

Welcome to our first newsletter published by Lettuce Work, "The Leaflet". This is just one way we plan to stay connected with our friends and supporters of Lettuce Work and our mission.

Current statistics show that 1 out of every 100 children born today will be diagnosed with Autism, and the statistics are even worse for boys, with 1 out of every 70 being diagnosed. That's about one child being diagnosed with autism every 20 minutes of every day.

We don't know what is causing this surge in autism, but we do know that we need to provide help to those who are afflicted with this disorder. Lettuce Work was created to help meet the ever-growing need to provide assistance to autistic young adults as they transition from the school-to-work environment.

We are blessed in our community to have so many wonderful early intervention programs and capable school systems to offer help to our school-age children on the autism spectrum. Unfortunately however, many of those support systems stop after our kids reach the age of 21, and most find themselves living at home with their parents, unemployed, and with no opportunities for the future.

Our mission at Lettuce Work is to be recognized as the best in the world at training adults with autism. Our goal is to help them become independent, self supporting, productive adults in our community. It's the right thing to do for our kids with autism as they become adults, and it's the right thing to do for our community. I hope you enjoy reading *The Leaflet*, and I'd like to thank all of you for your support. We can't realize our vision with you.



Doug Sharp
Executive Director