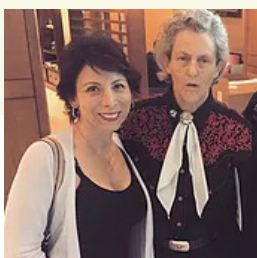


LIVING AND LEARNING

AUTISM

& other related challenges



150 Mary Alexander CT Northville, MI 48167 • 248.308.3592
LivingandLearningCenter.org

Temple Grandin (right), the leading autism advocate in our community and one of TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World, with Living and Learning founder Rachelle Vartanian (left). Rachelle met Temple at a recent conference.

It All Starts With You: Thank You For Your Support

Our job skills program adds valuable experience on a resume where there may not be any, and prepares young adults to be contributing members of your community. Equally important, thanks to your support, these young adults gain much needed self-esteem, confidence and employable skills.



Jared, a client in our job skills program, getting real world experience at Red Dot Coffee in downtown Northville, Michigan.

“ Using her life experience to help teens thrive, Rachelle Vartanian is creating lasting friendships in the heart of Detroit. ”

— Mitch Albom

Living and Learning Enrichment Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in downtown Northville, Michigan changing lives for teens and adults with autism and related challenges. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



Thank You

Thank you to the Northville Community Foundation for your generous support in being our fiscal sponsor while we awaited our nonprofit 501c3 designation (received in October, 2017) from the IRS.



What Exactly is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that causes problems with communication, social, verbal, and motor skills. No two people with autism are alike. A popular saying is, "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism." The United States Centers for Disease Control estimates one in 68 children have been diagnosed with ASD.



Delaney, one of our amazing young adult clients, with her mother Ann Marie.

“Living and Learning Enrichment Center has been, quite frankly, our light at the end of a very long, dark tunnel.”

— Ann Marie Collarossi-Evans, mother

Your support is needed to help us shatter the 90% unemployment rate!

Board of Directors

Rachelle Vartanian, Founder and President
Constance Washington, Director

Rich Page, Secretary
Ronald L. Coleman, Treasurer

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Jennifer Carpen, Social Skills Facilitator
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Pam Travis, Assistant Director
Tina Spencer, Art Therapist
Julie Woodward, Art Teacher
Jesse Track, Music Therapist
Kirt Manecke, PR & Development
Evan Vahratian, Social Skills Facilitator

ABOUT US

How to Lower the Unemployment Rate

The Job Skills/Employment Program prepares and employs young adults.

Do you know what the unemployment rate is for people who are on the autism spectrum? Would you be surprised if I told you it was 90%? Would you be surprised if I told you that most of these individuals have graduated from high school, and some have even graduated from college? Doing the job is not the issue for many, it is getting over the hurdle of the interview. If you ask any of these people what they are doing with their lives, most will share with you the same thing. They are living in their parent's basement, doing very little, and are depressed. Wouldn't you be? This is unacceptable to us and the driving force behind our **Job Skills/Employment Program**.

The Job Skills Program prepares people for the world of work. We do this by allowing our clients real world interactions in the business world. We work with as many local businesses as we can to give our clients the opportunity to experience a variety of skills on different job sites. Each program is specific to the needs of that person. Our community has embraced Living and Learning and the people who attend our programs. We have been able to create partnerships with Maybury Farm, Rebecca's Restaurant, Salon 170, The Village Workshop, Fresh Thyme Farmer's Market, The Farmer's Market, and First Centennial Title. These partnerships have allowed people with challenges more diversity in the skills they are learning on the job.

The Employment Program is for anyone who has autism or related challenges and is ready to seek employment. People in our program learn greetings, interviewing, appropriate behavior on the job, problem solving, and essential social skills with colleagues and customers. We individualize every program to the specific needs of each person.

All of our clients are provided with a job coach who assists them in learning different skills and tasks specific to that job. Depending on what their individual needs are will determine when we fade out and allow them to be independent. Even when they are independent and are working without assistance, we visit the job site weekly to follow up with them and their manager. We make sure that each party knows we are always available to provide support when and if a new hurdle arises. Many of our clients, still to this day, will text us while at work with a question about social interactions.

Your support is needed to help us shatter the 90% unemployment rate!

Ken (name changed to protect privacy) is a young adult with autism. Before coming to Living and Learning, Ken was struggling with life, he was lonely, depressed and doing very little outside of his home. He enrolled into the Job Skills/Employment Program and began learning important interview, leadership, and job skills. He learned the importance of listening, proper body language, work manners, and communication skills. Ken began making friends with people at the center and was asked to be a mentor. With his new work skills mastered, Ken was offered a position at Fresh Thyme Farmer's Market in Canton. His mother has told us that this totally changed Ken's life. She said that Ken is happy and his self-esteem has soared.

Your continued support will help us change more lives for people like Ken.

ABOUT US

Rachelle Vartanian's Inspiring Story

**The Oakland Press Features
Living and Learning**

Living and Learning founder and president Rachelle Vartanian was featured in the July 20, 2017 edition of The Oakland Press newspaper in the article, "Northville woman helps people with autism get jobs". You can read the article on the "News" page of our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org.



Mitch Albom features Living and Learning founder Rachelle Vartanian

Being the only center in the area offering social skills hang-outs for teens and adults attracted Mitch Albom to this cause.

Detroit TV personality and best-selling author Mitch Albom interviewed Living and Learning founder and president Rachelle Vartanian and featured Rachelle on his television program on Channel 4, Heart of Detroit. Rachelle told her moving story about how she started Living and Learning in a library when she was not able to find social skills training for her teenage son with autism. Watch the video interview and learn Rachelle's story on the home page of our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org



Mitch Albom interviews Living and Learning founder and president Rachelle Vartanian. They discuss the importance of social skills and the forgotten population-older kids with autism.

ABOUT US

Raising Money and Rocking On: Fresh Thyme Bucks for Brats Fundraiser



Thank you FreshThyme Farmers Market in Northville and Farmington for having our young adults into your stores to practice their job skills!

\$244.00 was raised during the Fresh Thyme Farmers Market Bucks for Brats fundraising event in Northville. Thank you Fresh Thyme, and to our generous donors, for your contributions.

The Farm That's Changing Lives: Thank you Maybury Farm



Young adults in The Job Skills/Employment Program from Living and Learning take care of the animals at Maybury Farm in Northville. These are transferable job skills that include social skills, responsibility, and customer service.



Learning How to Treat Customers Right and Sell Products: Northville Farmer's Market

A client, in The Summer Teens Jobs Skills Program, talks with a customer and sells products at the Northville Farmer's Market. Young adults learn to make eye contact, smile and greet customers, listen to needs and wants, say please and thank you, ask for the sale, and practice valuable customer service and sales skills.

Perfecting Social and Fundraising Skills: Northville Heritage Festival

Our vendor table at the Heritage Festival in downtown Northville was strategically designed to maximize visibility to get the word out to parents of children with special needs and attract donors. Clients took shifts and practiced their social and job skills by greeting visitors, explaining our programs, and fundraising. Thanks to your support, we raised \$778.00! Pictured from left to right, Angelica (client), Living and Learning Assistant Director Pam Travis with her two daughters, and Delaney (client).



COMMUNITY

New Programs are Fun...and Social

How to Learn Social Skills Without Really Trying

Gamer's Club
Anime Club
Sensory Art
The Social Club
Rock Band
Craft Art

The Rap - Adult Men Social Group
Sip & Chat - Adult Women Social Group
Friday and Saturday Night Hang-OUT
The Dude Zone
Drawing Class
Knitting Club

See next page for
more details.

In addition to our ongoing social and job skills programs like music therapy, Friday and Saturday Night Hang-outs and many others, we have introduced the following new programs at Living and Learning to build friendships, reduce anxiety, and help improve self-esteem and confidence.

“ We created these programs around what the teens and young adults told us they wanted. Then, we built the social skills into them ”

— Living and Learning founder, Rachelle Vartanian



Young women in our art class showing off their amazing art. Clients improve social skills, gain confidence and self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and meet new friends, all while learning a valuable skill.

NEW PROGRAMS

4th - 8th Grade Art Class

Boys and girls in the 4th through 8th grade who have high functioning autism and related challenges.

Saturdays from 11:15pm-12:15pm (Comics, Cartoons, Drawing Anime)

Middle School to Young Adult Art Class

For those in middle school through young adulthood who have high functioning autism and related challenges.

Saturdays 4:00pm-5:00pm. (Arts & Crafts)

Adult Art Class

For young adults-16 years & older who have autism, ADHD and or Social Anxiety issues. Art supplies provided.

Fridays 12:00 -1:00pm.

Anime Club

For Teens and young adults who have high functioning autism and related challenges. This is a place for people to come together to talk about, draw, and watch anime.

Wednesdays 5:00pm-7:00pm.

Gamer's Club

For Teens and young adults who have high functioning autism and related challenges. This is a place for people to come hangout and play video games.

Saturdays 1:00pm -3:00pm.

Workout Club

For all ages and all abilities. This is a 30 minute session, led by a certified trainer. Come exercise with us and have tons of fun while taking care of your health!

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays-times to be determined.

Learn more by visiting our website at

www.LivingandLearningCenter.org and click on "Services".

For pricing and more information, please call us at 248-308-3592.

We are happy to help you find the right program for your son or daughter.

Save Time : Sign up for Classes Online!

Due to growing demand for our classes, and to make it quick, easy and hassle free for you, we are switching to secure online payments for our classes. Once you have had the required intake, simply visit our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org to register (required first time only), sign up and pay for classes.

NEW PROGRAMS

“ This is the best hangout place I have ever been to. All of the teenagers there are very nice, and most of them like the stuff that I like. The staff is very friendly. This place has helped me make very valuable friends. ”

— Jana, Google Review



Teens and young adults at our Friday and Saturday Night Hang-Outs, enjoying their time with new friends.

Your Support Helps Parents Get Much-Needed Rest; Date Night

Many parents of children with special needs haven't had a date together in years. We have the answer! Thanks to your ongoing support, which helps provide a safe center for our teens and young adults, many parents are able to get out without worry. Our Friday and Saturday night hang-outs, from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, are very popular with parents and their kids!

Your teen or adult son or daughter will be well taken care of and enjoy social activities and dinner while they meet new friends. Specific activities have been set up to promote and encourage personal space, social reciprocity, tone of voice, fine motor skills, and the nuances of creating friendships. Start taking time for yourself and get some much overdue respite! Sign your son or daughter up for our Friday or Saturday Night Hang-outs. Learn more on our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org under “Services” or call us at 248-308-3592.

Learning Financial Responsibility

When we help clients obtain employment, we teach them about finances. This includes setting up a new bank account. They learn about savings and checking accounts, responsible money management, debit cards, balancing their checkbook, and more.

Looking to Increase Visibility and Goodwill for Your Business? Become a Corporate Sponsor!

We are always looking for corporate sponsors! According to Edelman's "Good Purpose Study," 73% of consumers will switch brands if a different brand supported a good cause. According to another research study by Cone Communications, a whopping 89 percent of consumers are likely to switch brands to one that is associated with a good cause if price and quality are similar.

To become a corporate sponsor today, please use the enclosed reply envelope. Please make checks payable to Living and Learning and write "Corporate Sponsorship" on the check memo. You can also donate securely online by clicking "Donate Now" on our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org.

Double Your Donation! Employee Matching Gifts Program

Does your employer offer an employee matching gift program? Many companies sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees. It's an easy way to double your contribution to us! To find out if your company has a matching gift program, simply enter your employer's name in the box at <https://doublethedonation.com/matching-gift-search/>.

A Very Generous Insurance Agent: Allstate Insurance Agency Donates \$1,800.00!

The generous staff at Cheryl Bowker Insurance Agency along with owner and agent Cheryl Bowker (far right) presents a check for \$1,800.00 to Living and Learning founder Rachelle Vartanian (second from right). Thank you for your support!



Are You an Employer Looking to Hire Reliable Employees?

We are seeking part-time or full time employment opportunities for graduates of our Job Skills/Employment Programs. There are many benefits to hiring individuals with autism and special needs:

- Reliable and consistent on the job
- Detail oriented
- Enjoy routine
- Serious work ethic
- Lower employee turnover rates
- Extremely honest
- Focus well on repetitive tasks

Please give us a call at 248-308- 3592 or email us at LivingandLearningCenter@gmail.com. We'd love to talk with you!

Did you know? The Living and Learning Difference

Did you know that some businesses providing social skills training for individuals with autism employ inexperienced staff who don't have a college degree and pay them low wages? At Living and Learning, we only hire qualified, caring, and passionate individuals with college degrees in the special education field. You can rest assured that your child is receiving the highest quality training from our organization.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Help Change the Lives of More Young People Like Amanda: Become a Monthly Donor

Amanda loves her new job! Thanks to your help, the job skills she learned at Living and Learning enabled Amanda to obtain her first job. Amanda Never Had a Job Before...Now She Has Her DREAM JOB!

We're so successful with some of our programs for young adults that we're consistently growing and need more financial support to cover the costs. Please visit www.LivingandLearningCenter.org and click on DONATE NOW to make a secure online monthly tax-deductible contribution to help us help more individuals like Amanda. You simply choose or type in your donation amount, click the radio button next to "Monthly recurring donation", fill out and submit your donation. It's that simple!



Why become a monthly donor? Becoming a monthly donor is convenient. Your payments are spread out over a series of months, making your investment more affordable for you. This provides Living and Learning with a consistent, dependable revenue stream to help more individuals in need.

The Easiest Way to Help More People? Move to a Larger Space!



We are moving! Due to increased demand for our programs, we are running out of room! Thanks to your support, we are moving to a new location this winter, just a few blocks northeast of our current location. This large home will give us the room to expand our programs to help many more individuals. The large yard will allow us to hold programs and events outside, enabling us to expand the number of individuals per class. We are moving into a historic house in downtown Northville. Our new address is 315 Griswold Street, Northville, MI 48167. Our new location is located one block north of Main Street, across (west) from Planet Fitness and just north on the corner. Please stop by and say, "Hello."

People Attend Our Programs from as Far Away as India!

We have families coming to Living and Learning who drive quite a distance for the services we provide. While most of our clients are from the Northville, Plymouth, Canton area we do get clients, who attend regularly, driving from South Lyon, Troy, Ypsilanti, and Allen Park. The reason for this is simple: Nothing like this exists where they live.

During a Saturday Night Hang-OUT over the summer, a woman peeked her head in the door to see what we were doing. She asked a lot of questions about what we did at the center and the type of people we work with there. She then asked if she could come back another time to visit with her cousins. When we met with her and her cousins they explained to us that they had a brother with autism living in India. We learned from them, that their brother's name was Pavan, he was a young adult with high functioning autism, living with their mother and father. At times the conversation became emotional as they explained to us how people with special needs were often treated horribly by others. They were afraid for his future and the limited choices that were available for him there. After several more meetings we met Pavan and his parents via SKYPE and created a solid plan for him to come to the United States with his mom. Pavan and his mother arrived in September. It's been wonderful having him attend our different programs and seeing him smile and grow.

UPDATES

“ I can’t tell you how much Living and Learning has changed my son’s life. To think just two years ago, he was sitting at home never leaving the house. You all gave him the confidence and tools to deal with his anxiety and provide him a safe and fun place he considers a home away from home now.

I’ll never forget the time when I picked him up from hangout and he said, “Mom, it’s a place I know that they like me.” My heart melted. He has never felt so accepted anywhere else in his life. Thank you to all the wonderful staff and mentors.”

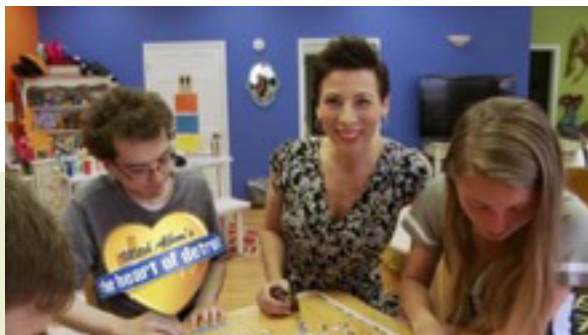
— Heather Gilghrist - Austin’s Mom

Let's Change Lives Faster: A Note from Our Director

"I can't thank you enough for all of your support. Because of you and your generous support of our classes and programs, and your important contributions, we are helping so many people! Thanks to you, we are becoming more successful with our programs for teens and adults. We're growing every day and need financial support to continue helping more people. Living and Learning is now a nonprofit 501c3 organization. Being a nonprofit will help us obtain foundation grants, corporate donations, donations from major donors, and more.

We want to be a resource for you and our families. There is no one answer for any of these kids. We spend a lot of time on the phone and by email helping individuals and guiding them to the proper resource. Our resource section in our center includes information and brochures from area doctors, counselors, therapists, psychologists, insurance agents, and more.

As you know, we are moving to a larger center so we can double our impact. Our ten year plan is to create an independent, intergenerational living campus for young adults and adults with autism and related special needs. A place where they can live with dignity and as independently as possible, combined with a senior center, retail shops where our clients can work, manufacturing silos where our clients can produce items to sell, maybe an animal rescue shelter where they can volunteer and work, and more. This will take money, and lots of it, but with your help we can and will do it. Thank you in advance for your tax-deductible end of the year contributions."



Living and Learning founder and president Rachelle Vartanian (middle). This photo is from Mitch Albom's Heart of Detroit television segment featuring Rachelle and Living and Learning.



Video Modeling/ABA Therapy Program

Featured on Channel 7: Discussing the Benefits of Video Modeling/ABA Therapy

Living and Learning founder and president Rachelle Vartanian and Living and Learning behavior therapist and PhD Mari MacFarland discuss our job skills program and video modeling program during an interview with Channel 7 News in Detroit.

“Out of everything you’ve had me do, this has helped me the most.”

— Anthony Pepple, teenager
and Living and Learning client

Our ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) Video Modeling program will start in February. Please contact us at 248-308-3592 or visit our website at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org to sign up and learn more.

THANK YOU

Living and Learning Contributor Recognition 2017

We would like to thank the following friends who have
contributed to Living and Learning

Steward (up to \$999)

Jennifer Beyer
Marcia Hardies
Sharon Haig
Steve and Mary Jo Bandy

Corporate Donors

Cheryl Bowker Insurance Agency

In-Kind Gifts

Sarah Ables for the wireless Bluetooth speaker.
Tita Daskal for nail polish.
Ann Marie Evans for the new vacuum cleaner.
Perkins Family for a Stereo System and TV.
Robazza Family for the keyboard.
Cherie Baby for the large freezer.

Thank You for Your Generosity

4th Wall
The ARC of Livingston County
Cherie Baby Ice Cream Cafe
Carson's at Laurel Park Place
Detroit Comics
Northville DDA, Lori Ward
Fred's Ice Cream Shop
Fresh Thyme Farmer's Market
Granite City
Dr. Richard Howlin
Hungry Howies, Northville
Juanita's Fresh Salsa
Maybury Farm
Michigan Rehabilitation Services (M.R.S.)
Mitch Albom
Motor City Swing
Nest to Nest
Northville Chamber of Commerce

Northville Community Foundation
Northville Farmer's Market
Northville Parks and Recreation
Northville Yoga Room
Papa Johns, Northville
Parmenter's Cider Mill
Rebecca's Restaurant
Red Dot Coffee
Red Maple Retreat
Simply Fresh, Plymouth
Sunrise Assisted Living, Northville
Team Guts
The Accounting Firm
The Tipping Point Theater
The Village Workshop
Trust and Obey Dog Training, Northville
WOK Asian Bistro

All of our wonderful high school and college mentors!
Our amazing volunteers!
So many of the generous businesses in downtown Northville who
welcome our young adults in to practice their social introductions!

Living and Learning Enrichment center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
Your contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

LIVING AND LEARNING

AUTISM

**& other related
challenges**

**SOCIAL
SKILLS**

**TEENS
&
ADULTS**

**JOB
SKILLS**

Wish List

15 passenger van, lease or donated, to transport clients to and from our job skills programs. Many individuals with autism who'd like to be working stay at home without anything to do simply because they don't have transportation to get to and from our job skills programs. Can you help?

Invest in Your Community: Become a Contributor Today

If you have not made a contribution yet in 2017, donate online at www.LivingandLearningCenter.org or please use the enclosed reply envelope to make your gift today. Or consider making an extra gift to further our efforts. Contributions are tax- deductible. Contributors receive our informative newsletter and are recognized in the newsletter after their gift.



Living and Learning Enrichment center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Living and Learning Enrichment Center

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