



BROTHERS GROW TOGETHER

Brothers Matt and Kyle, students in Kari Miller's Pathways autism classroom, bring their distinctive personalities, along with their own gifts and challenges.

Kyle (pictured right) is extremely spunky and carefree. He loves working with the staff, typing silly things on his communication device, and walking through the school hallways with staff. He delights in affection and positive affirmation.

Matt (pictured left) is much quieter and more reserved than his brother. His mom describes him as "a handful of greatness." While he is much more verbal than Kyle, he prefers to work independently and enjoys time alone. He can be timid but communicates well through his communication device.



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Elim staff leveraged a unique brotherly bond to help them grow.

BROTHERS GROW TOGETHER

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Matt was in Ms. Miller's room for one year without his brother before she recommended that the boys be moved into the same classroom. "Kyle and Matt are twins and have a special relationship and bond. They will always go through life together, and we wanted to give them the skills they need to be successful at home and at school."

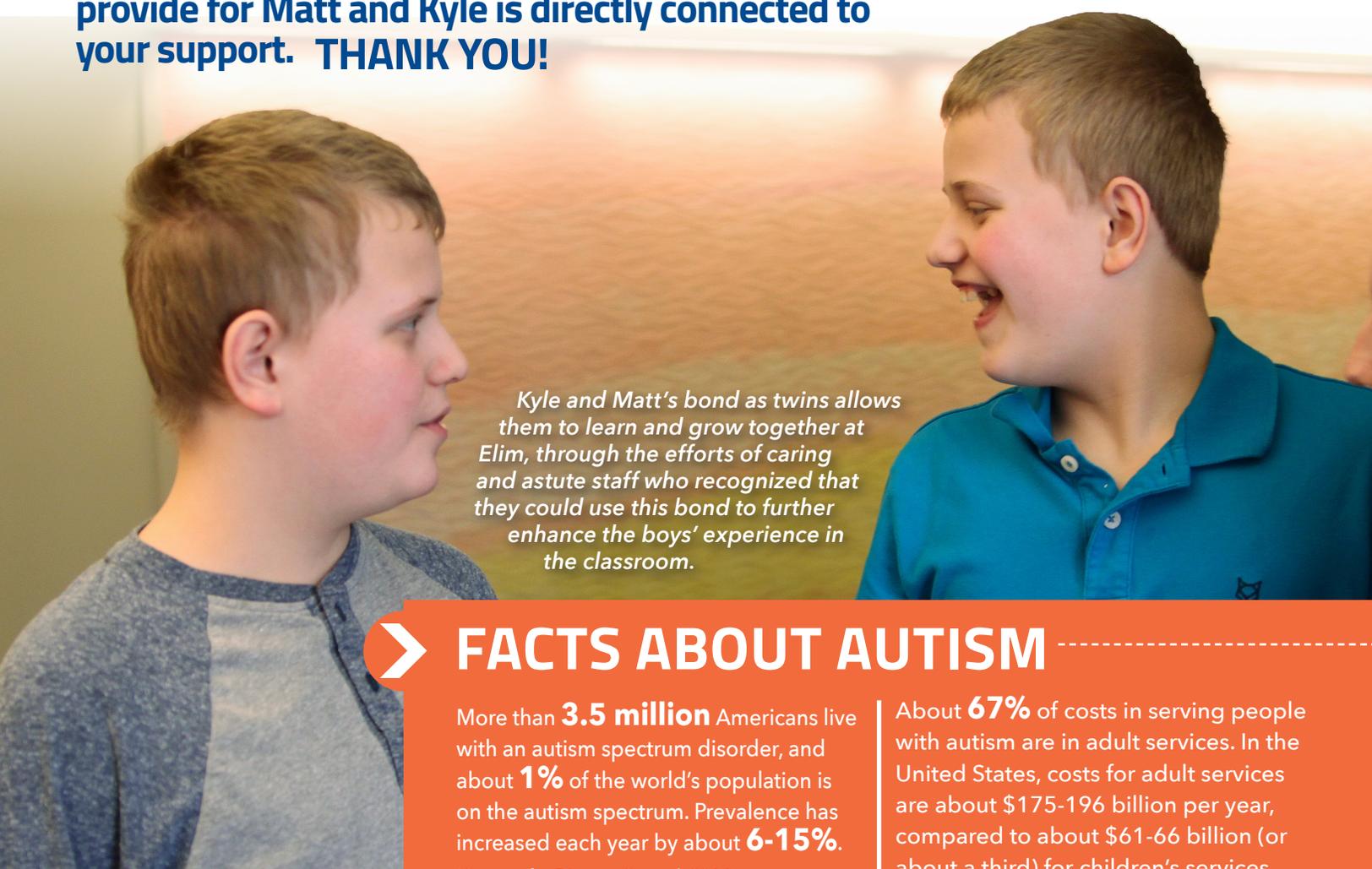
Being in the same classroom was a big transition for the boys, especially because they are so different. Because of their familiarity with each other, Kyle sometimes became frustrated with Matt when his schedule or daily activities overwhelmed him. Staff worked with Kyle to develop coping and communication skills he could use when he got frustrated with his environment. Because Matt is more reserved, he was encouraged to develop his social skills by interacting more with his brother.

Their growth has spilled over into positive changes at home, too! They both use their communication devices at home, they can now tell their mom about their wants and needs. The brothers can share what they want to eat or when something is upsetting them. They enjoy going on car rides together and have grown in independence.

The twins' mom, Kim, is so grateful for the education and care provided by Elim's staff. She loves seeing the boys' happiness when the bus pulls up and both boys are eager to head to Elim for the day.

"I am thankful for all the staff, therapists, and teachers they've had over the years," says Kim. "Both boys are growing into such great young men. The other day, Kyle, who struggles with communication, recited his entire classroom prayer. I was in tears to see how far he's come! I can't say enough good things about Elim."

The level of support and attention Elim is able to provide for Matt and Kyle is directly connected to your support. THANK YOU!



Kyle and Matt's bond as twins allows them to learn and grow together at Elim, through the efforts of caring and astute staff who recognized that they could use this bond to further enhance the boys' experience in the classroom.



FACTS ABOUT AUTISM

More than **3.5 million** Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder, and about **1%** of the world's population is on the autism spectrum. Prevalence has increased each year by about **6-15%**.

(Centers for Disease Control, 2014)

About **67%** of costs in serving people with autism are in adult services. In the United States, costs for adult services are about \$175-196 billion per year, compared to about \$61-66 billion (or about a third) for children's services.

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2014)



We celebrate each step in a student's journey, especially when they are literal steps!

CHEERS FOR AN EMPTY WAGON

Bradley's wagon is sitting unused – and it's cause for celebration!

Before this year, Bradley traveled everywhere at Elim in a red wagon. It was difficult for Bradley to transition between activities and locations, so our staff used the wagon to assist in transporting him.

This year, that's all changed! Now, Bradley walks everywhere independently. He's able to eat in the lunchroom with his peers and travel out into the community for educational outings.

Bradley has also made huge strides in communication this year. Paired with an "assistive technology" device, Bradley now has a book to communicate his wants and needs. His communication growth has made a positive impact both at school and at home.

Bradley's teachers can't wait to see how much he'll grow! "We've seen Bradley already make so much progress in his daily living skills," his teacher shares. "We want to help him continue to grow in independence!"

Your gifts make these milestones possible. Thank you!



In June 2014, only **19.3%** of people with disabilities in the U.S. were participating in the labor force - working or seeking work. Of those, **12.9%** were unemployed, meaning only **16.8%** of the population with disabilities was employed.

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014)

Message from the president

THE GIFT OF HOPE

Christ's death and resurrection on Easter, the turning point in history, ushered in grace and gives us hope. While hope is available to everyone equally, it seems logical that it would take on greater significance for those who stand to benefit more from it.

At first glance then, it might appear that the children and adults at Elim stand to benefit more from hope. Take for example the students and adults with autism who participate in Elim's Pathways and ACTS programs. Their stories, which are included in this issue of the *Equip*, chronicle their impressive hope-filled journeys of engaging the sensory issues that make it challenging for them to communicate and engage with others.

Biblically the truth is clear. We *all* have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), so we are *all* dependent on the hope of Easter. Each one of us, including the students and adults with autism that participate in Elim's Pathways and ACTS programs, are on a hope-filled journey of engaging the issues that challenge us from being everything that God created us to be. All of us stand to benefit equally from the hope that is offered to us in Christ Jesus, and all of us can live out that hope by loving others just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (Ephesians 5:2).

Dr. Bill Lodewyk
President



SENSORY BREAKS BRING PEACE FOR WILLIE!

Willie is thriving with the individualized and structured programming of ACTS, our specialized program for adults with autism. Through ACTS, Willie has the opportunity to take sensory breaks that help him relax and collect his thoughts and emotions. He no longer becomes easily overwhelmed, and he finds it easier to participate in work and learning activities.

The smaller client-staff ratio in ACTS makes it easier for Willie to communicate his need for breaks. He loves to walk outside on the nature trail near Elim's greenhouse. In our dedicated sensory room, he has opportunities to swing and be soothed by the sight and sound of a waterfall. The sensory breaks bring Willie peace, and he's more motivated and able to engage in activities.

One of Willie's favorite activities is his weekly volunteer outing at a nearby recreation center. He works hard alongside his friends cleaning tables so the senior citizens at the center can play bingo. He loves to work and help others!

The ACTS life skills program serves 15 adults and focuses on communication, coping, and social skills to best serve adults with a primary diagnosis of autism. All skills training in ACTS is individualized and includes vocational, daily life skills, and community integration.



USE THE ENCLOSED PERSONALIZED FORM TO SEND YOUR GIFT TODAY!

YOUR GIFTS EQUIP PEOPLE FOR GOD'S PURPOSES!

Choosing one of the following options will provide the opportunities and support that will equip children and adults at Elim to achieve their highest God-given potential. Please mark the amount you are enclosing:

- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$_____ to support as many children and adults as possible.



ELIM CHRISTIAN SERVICES | 13020 S. Central Ave. | Palos Heights, IL 60463 | 708-293-6509 | www.elimcs.org



The Elim Pathways and ACTS programs are specifically designed to focus on building communication skills as well as community-based education and integration activities that will prepare individuals with autism for successful life - in the classroom and at home.

These specialized approaches to support people with autism also mean greater cost. Elim needs the support of committed donors - every day of the year - to keep all its programs running strong.

Your gifts make a difference!

To give securely online, go to www.elimcs.org



Elim Christian Services: Our Mission

At Elim, we know that each individual has been created in God's image and that He has a specific purpose and calling for each of us. With your help, we strive to equip individuals with disabilities to achieve their highest God-given potential by living their lives to glorify Him! Elim accomplishes this mission through the following program areas that serve people of all ages:

- Elim Christian School
- Domestic and International Outreach
- HOPE Packs



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