



PEP TALK

Programs for Exceptional People's Monthly Newsletter

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Wow, what a month! April included two very big events—RBC Heritage and Special Olympics. Both events were a blast! At Heritage, our members had the opportunity to meet professional golfers Dustin Johnson and Jim Furyk. During Special Olympics, athletes competed in a 100 meter and 50 meter walk, a 100 meter and 50 meter run, and a softball throw. We're very proud of our athletes!

Now, for the news everyone has been waiting for...PEP is officially moving to Bluffton! On Wednesday, May 2, we closed on the sale of our 10 Oak Park Dr. office building. On Friday, May 4, we closed on the purchase of our new building at 39 Sheridan Park Circle in Bluffton. The next step will be for some of our staff to start operating in the new building. We are waiting on a license from SCDDSN, and once that is received, we will begin serving members at the new location. The members and instructors will remain in Hilton Head at the Vocational Center, which we rent, in the meantime. We are very excited about our wonderful and spacious new building and all of the opportunities Bluffton will bring. Stay tuned for more news about the move and future grand opening!



Getting ready to ride bikes



Visiting with dogs



Bowling at Station 300



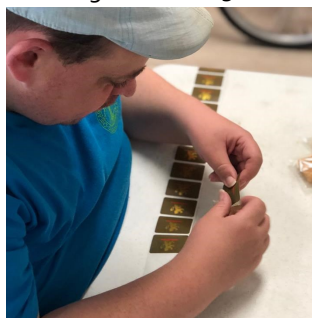
RBC Heritage—Day 1



RBC Heritage—Day 2



PEP ceramics group



Contract work



Special Olympics banner



Contract Work



Pinckney Island



Special Olympics



First Pitch at USCB game

Island Special Team Cheer Squad

Coached by Connor Dafler, Owner of Carolina Dream

If you've been to PEP, you've probably noticed the rows of trophies displayed in our front office. These trophies were earned by the Island Special Team, a competitive cheerleading squad that is made up of seven PEP members, along with several other adults with special needs. This unique and talented cheer squad is coached by Connor Dafler, a PEP Vocational Instructor and the Owner of Carolina Dream All Stars.

The Island Special Team was created back in 2003 when Connor's mom, Julie Dafler, helped run a gym called Island Cheerleading Academy. The staff at the gym were interested in creating a special team and they reached out to PEP. The coaches began teaching cheer to some PEP members to see if they were interested, and they were immediately hooked. John and Sue, current PEP members, were on the first special team, so they are going into their 15th year with the squad.



The Island Special Team in the early years.

Flash forward to January 2017, when Connor created her own gym called Carolina Dream All Stars. She took the Island Special Team under the wing of her new business. Along with the special team, Carolina Dream All Stars offers tumbling classes, cheer classes, and a competitive cheerleading program to kids of all ages. Connor coaches classes Monday through Thursday after hours at PEP.



Connor with the Island Special Team when she was a kid.

PEP members are very lucky to have Connor as a coach, as she has a ton of cheer experience and has been cheering since she was seven. She did All Star cheerleading all throughout elementary, middle, and high school, and she also started coaching in high school. In college, she coached at gyms and taught tumbling. She has also helped coach the special team since she was nine. "I was brought into it and I really am so thankful for it. Ever since I was a young age I was around this population," says Connor.

Fitness, in general, has always been a big part of her life. She graduated from USC with a degree in Public Health. During her last year of college, she became certified as a personal trainer. She trained in Charleston for a year at the MUSC Wellness Center.

The Island Special Team competes all throughout the Southeast. They travel to Charleston, Atlanta, Charlotte, Savannah, and Jacksonville. Their squad is very unique because it is one of the only teams made up of all adults. Most other teams they compete against at competitions are made up of young kids.

The team has earned some pretty impressive awards over the years. Their first year going to Cheersport Nationals, the biggest country-wide competition, they competed against over 20 other teams in their division and won third place. The second year they went to Cheersport Nationals, they won second place.

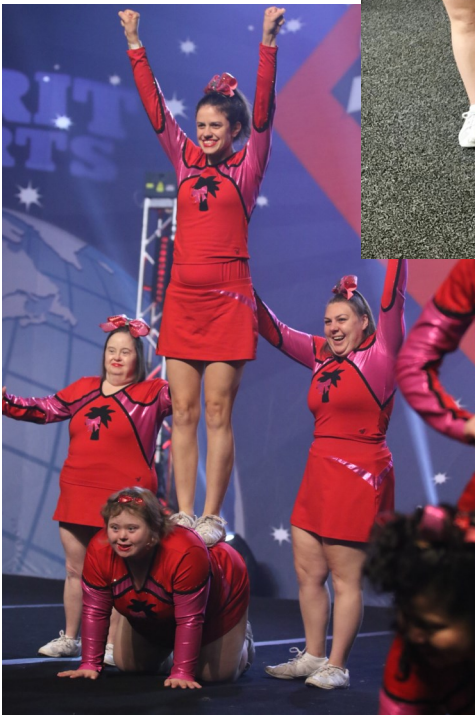
However, as great as winning awards is, that's not what matters most. What matters is that the team is learning new skills, working on their fitness, bonding with peers, and gaining confidence. "They all get to shine with their individual abilities. When I create the routines, I showcase each person with what their strengths are. I think the coolest part about it is it's not focusing on the disabilities, it's showcasing the things that they can do," Connor says.

The Island Special Team teammates are very close to one another. The team has created many friendships, bonding experiences, and fun memories. Everyone on the team looks out for each other. This is proven every day at PEP. Co-captain of the team, Taylor, was seen helping one of her teammates, Kristin, while walking at Heritage. She said, "I look out for her and help her. I'm the co-captain on the cheer squad and she's my teammate. That's what we do."

Island Special Team Cheer Squad

Coached by Connor Dafler, Owner of Carolina Dream

The team just finished their 2017-2018 season, so they're just starting to prepare for the next season. Their first competition will be held in December. There is also an exciting change coming to the team. This year, they will be called the Island Dream Team since they are now incorporated within Carolina Dream All Stars. They will keep their same bright colors and their same amazing spirit. Wish them luck for this upcoming season!



Volunteer Spotlight

Robert Apfel, AKA 'Yoga Bob'



May's Volunteer Spotlight belongs to PEP's very own yoga professional, 'Yoga Bob'! He first started volunteering at PEP in December 2013. He teaches a yoga class every other Friday to PEP members.

We are truly lucky to have him, as he is a true yoga expert. He has taught over 1600 yoga classes. In addition to PEP, he teaches classes at Sea Pines Resort Fitness Center, Moss Creek, and the Country Club of Hilton Head.

PEP members came up with the name 'Yoga Bob', and it has stuck throughout the years. He is so committed to the name that he put it on his license plate, which absolutely thrilled our members (pictured left).

How did you get interested in volunteering with us?

I was working at Jiva Yoga Studio at the time and PEP apparently contacted them because they needed a fill-in there. I filled in a couple of times and when your regular volunteer had to leave, I just took it over.

What exactly do you do at PEP when you volunteer?

The teaching is not a traditional yoga class because of the limitations that many of the people have. We talk a little bit and work to get them to be relaxed and to feel good. Then, depending on who's there, we'll do some stretching, balance poses, and pretty much just have a nice, serene time to try and get everybody to relax. Relaxation really works to relieve a lot of stress.

How long have you been practicing yoga?

I started practicing yoga in May 2011. I started by going to classes at Jiva, and then a year and a half later, I completed teacher training in January 2013. I took a compacted course. You need 200 hours of training and I did that in 15 days.

What do you think are the greatest benefits of yoga for PEP members?

Stress relief, a certain amount of physical improvement by virtue of de-stressing, and the overall ability to just feel good about yourself.

Do you have a favorite memory or story from your time volunteering at PEP?

PEP is special. It's a special class. I especially look forward to it because they really are special people and all they want to do is to just lead a normal life and I just get the feeling that I've done my little bit to help them feel like they have the ability to enjoy life.

What do you find most rewarding about teaching yoga to PEP members?

The satisfaction I get both when I come in and everyone says, "Yoga Bob is here," and just the overall enthusiasm they show when I'm here whether they participate in the practice or not. And, of course, when I run across people in the general public, like in the supermarket, it's always, "Hi, Yoga Bob." That name started here and it's the source of my license plate.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and your background.

I've been here (on HHI) for almost 19 years. Prior to that, I was in Philadelphia for 28 years. I'm originally from Buffalo, New York. My work background is Finance and Administration in television. I have done a lot of things—I have done some ocean sailing, taught scuba diving, played a lot of tennis here. Out of all of that, yoga has ended up being probably one of the most rewarding things I've ever done and I wish I would've found it a long, long time ago. I am married, I have three grown children, eight granddaughters, and two great grandsons.

Interested in volunteering?

Fill out the volunteer interest form on our website!

www.pephhi.org/volunteer-application

*"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so
much."*

– Helen Keller



Get to Know Our Team

Sgt. Timothy Thayer

Director of Community and Employment Services

Tim is a retired U.S. Army Ranger from Gilford, Michigan. After serving the country, he worked for ten years as residential care staff at Michigan State Psychiatric Hospital. After he moved to Bluffton, Tim started at PEP in April 2016.

He manages all of the daily schedules and activities of the members, staff, and drivers, as well as coordinates all volunteers. He also finds work opportunities for our members and runs the Lawn and Home Care micro-business.

Tim is adored by PEP members and is always working hard to make sure each day runs smoothly.

What got you interested in PEP and your position here?

I moved down to South Carolina in late 2015. I was always in the business of helping people. When I moved down here and heard about PEP, I basically put my resume out there, emailed Steve a couple times, he called me in and that was about all she wrote. I've been here ever since. When I first started here, I got the lawn crew all started. Then, a little while later, the position I'm currently in was created because there was help needed in the program and everyday aspect of PEP.

Can you tell me about your background and experience with the Army?

I'm a retired Army Ranger, 75th Ranger Battalion. I served for about six years, and was deployed for about five and a half years. I medically retired and got out of the military and went straight to work at a psychiatric hospital in Michigan.

How have those experiences shaped you and do you still apply things you learned in the Army to your everyday life?

It shaped me in the aspect of discipline and making a goal, setting it, and achieving it. All that has helped me in everyday life because I still use what I learned in that aspect. You come to work every day, and you set a goal, especially with the members we have. You set a goal for them, then you see that gratification when they accomplish it. It's not only my gratification knowing that I set that, but their gratification in achieving it.

What has been your favorite part about working at PEP?

Even if I had a bad night, I can come in here in the morning and my day changes. That will always be my favorite part about PEP. I can come in here no matter what is going on outside of here, and PEP changes my mood instantly.

“The biggest goal I come in with every day is making sure everyone smiles.”

What have been your most recent goals or priorities for PEP?

Making sure that our micro-businesses, like lawn care, are fully functional. Also, focusing on a lot of the community aspect—just making sure the community knows about us. Along with everyone else here, I pass out my business cards daily. The biggest goal I come in with every day is making sure everyone smiles.

What do you wish other people in the community knew about PEP and our members?

Realizing that they are just as unique and willing and able as we are. I wish more people would treat everybody as normal as possible and not segregate or label.

What do you like doing in your free time?

I do a lot of fishing. I go crabbing a lot. And I ride my motorcycle.

Describe yourself using three words.

Determined. Enthusiastic. Motivated.

Giving Opportunities



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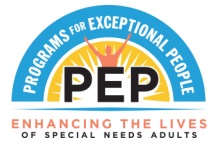
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You can also donate via mail, over the phone, or through PayPal by using the 'Donate!' button on our website!

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Hilton Head, SC 29926**

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pephhi.org**

May 4, 2018



Special Olympics Highlights

Held Friday, April 20 at May River High School

Special Olympics was another overwhelming success this year! Our athletes from PEP worked extremely hard and did such a great job competing. It was wonderful to see all the athletes from so many schools and organizations come together for a friendly competition. All of their faces were filled with pride, confidence, and smiles all day long.

SOAR did a fabulous job putting together the event. The day truly wouldn't have been possible without the hospitality of May River High School and all of the students who got involved, the volunteers who were so helpful in making sure everything went smoothly, and all of the staff from the participating organizations. Until next year!



Recreation and Leisure Calendar

May 2018

Tuesday, May 1

Sign Language with Ms. Jennie

Pick up at HHI—4:45 pm

Pick up at Bluffton—5:15 pm

Wednesday, May 2

Bowling at Station 300

Pick up at Station 300—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

Tuesday, May 8

Bike Riding

Pick up at Bluffton—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

*Four members allowed. Must be able to ride a three-wheeled bike.

Wednesday, May 9

Ceramics in Bluffton

Pick up at Bluffton—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

Thursday, May 10

Farmers Market

Pick up at Market—5:00 pm

Pick up at HHI—5:45 pm

Tuesday, May 15

Sign Language with Ms. Jennie

Pick up at HHI—4:45 pm

Pick up at Bluffton—5:15 pm

Wednesday, May 16

Bowling at Station 300

Pick up at Station 300—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

Saturday, May 19

Mighty Eighth Museum

Drop off at HHI—9:00 am

Drop off at Bluffton—9:30 am

Pick up at Bluffton—3:00 pm

Pick up at HHI—3:30 pm

Tuesday, May 22

Mini-Golf

Pick up at HHI—5:15 pm

Pick up at Bluffton—5:30 pm

*Members will need \$5

Wednesday, May 23

First Tee Golf

Pick up at Bluffton—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

Thursday, May 24

Fishing

Pick up at Bluffton—5:30 pm

Pick up at HHI—6:00 pm

Wednesday, May 30

Movies at Northridge

Cinema 10

Pick up at Northridge—TBD

Pick up at Bluffton—TBD

*Members will need \$6.50



PEP in the News

Click to watch our most recent episode of Girl Talk



Kara Artman
PEP

Michelle Taylor
Birdie James

Debi Lynes
Girl Talk Host

