

April 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to our April newsletter! This month is a reminder that just as “April showers bring May flowers,” we look ahead with optimism for the growth to come!

We are proud to recognize Autism Acceptance Month, Public Health Week, Volunteer Week and Earth Day. We are also excited to share the remarkable success of two recent events that raised funds to support ESPH programs. Happy April!

Autism Acceptance Month

Autism Advocacy

April is Autism Acceptance Month. To recognize this month, we sat down with team members from our Autism + ABA team to learn how advocacy positively impacts the lives of the autistic individuals Easterseals PORT Health (ESPH) supports. Read the full story at eastersealsPORT.com/autism2026.



Pictured: Charlotte, Autism Community Partner, and Lainey, BCBA

April 6-12, 2026

Public Health Week

National Public Health Week (April 6-12, 2026) celebrates the power of prevention, honors public health workers and advocates for healthier communities. Dr. Kaoud, Easterseals PORT Health’s Chief Medical Officer, shared how ESPH champions healthy communities.



Pictured: Dr. Kaoud

“Health is not defined by a single moment in a person’s life, but by the full tapestry of their physical, emotional and social well-being. Easterseals PORT Health is committed to whole person care. Our teams embody the spirit of public health every day with compassionate care that strengthens both individuals and the communities we support.”

– Dr. Kaoud, ESPH Chief Medical Officer

April 19-25, 2026

Volunteer Week

Easterseals PORT Health (ESPH) is extremely grateful for our dedicated volunteers and the positive impacts of their service. This year we are proud to highlight Stuart, who has been an ESPH volunteer for more than two years. Read her full story at eastersealsPORT.com/volunteer2026.

“Seeing how ESPH’s programs directly support individuals and families in our community motivated me to get involved. What keeps me coming back is witnessing the real difference fundraising events make in helping to support this organization’s awesome programs.”

– Stuart, ESPH volunteer



Pictured: Stuart

April 22, 2026

Earth Day

We believe that nature is healing! The residents of the Ashcraft Group Home in Charlotte, NC, recently enjoyed making pinecone bird feeders with the help of volunteers and staff. Each pinecone was coated in peanut butter and rolled in bird seeds, creating a tasty treat for local birds. This fun activity allowed the residents to express their creativity while connecting with nature. This Earth Day, we invite you to take a moment to appreciate the incredible beauty and benefits of the outdoors!



Pictured: Volunteer hanging pinecone bird feeder



Pictured: Resident making pinecone bird feeder



Pictured: DSP making pinecone bird feeder

Making An Impact

Chef Fest 2026

Chef Fest Success

A big thank you to everyone who made Chef Fest 2026 unforgettable! From the chefs, guests, sponsors, vendors, volunteers and behind the scenes staff who made it happen, we are incredibly grateful. Our Culinary Connections students dazzled the crowd with their tasty sweet treats, incredible hospitality and work ethic.



Pictured: Culinary Connections students

Congratulations to the 2026 Chef Fest Award Winners!

Chef Fest Champ (guest choice, favorite entrée):
The Twisted Fork, Chef Pam Smith

Sweet Champ (guest choice, favorite dessert):
Addison's Catering, Chef Brittney Batts

VA Eats + Drinks Living La Vida Locavore Award (critic's choice):
Mermaid Catering, Chef Julie Aubrey

Tall Toque Award (critic's choice):
Zoe's Steak and Seafood, Chef Paul Benton

Making An Impact

Miracle Moments Luncheon 2026

Making Miracle Moments Happen

What an extraordinary day of community and compassion. With 160 guests gathered in support of Easterseals PORT Health, the event raised more than \$100,000 to fuel life-changing programs for the individuals and families we serve.

Thanks to the unwavering generosity of our sponsors, board members, donors and table hosts, we were able to share our mission in a meaningful way, highlight the real impact of our work and expand both awareness and support across our community. Together, you helped turn moments into miracles — and we are deeply grateful.



Support Your Neighbors in North Carolina and Virginia!

Easterseals PORT Health is a trustworthy, compassionate partner providing exceptional disability, mental health and substance use services to help our neighbors live their best lives. Purpose, dedication and empathy drive our in-person and telehealth service delivery. Our diverse and inclusive 2,600 member team provides more than 10.2 million hours of meaningful support to 40,200 kids, adults and families in 11,000 home, facility and community locations across North Carolina and Virginia.



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