

Ben's Place Services, Inc.

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www.bensplacecof.org

Ben's Place News

Our Mission is to provide social experiences and support the independence of individuals with disabilities.

We provide unique opportunities for individuals with developmental, physical, or acquired disabilities to interact and learn life and vocational skills with their peers in a social environment.

Our vision is based on the premise that individuals with disabilities will be respected and appreciated for their own individual capabilities as they strive toward their own personal dreams.

*Created different. Treated equal.
A community of friends.*



inside this issue:

From the President	2	Wills, Trusts, and ABLE	3
Executive Director, Annie	2	Legacy of Love Webinar Series	4
2021 Fundraisers	2	Just around the corner.....	4
Getting to know CJ	3	Board Members and Staff	4

Getting to know CJ...

Just sit right back and hear a tale of a young man known by the name Cornelius Johnson. His family and close friends call him "CJ" for short.

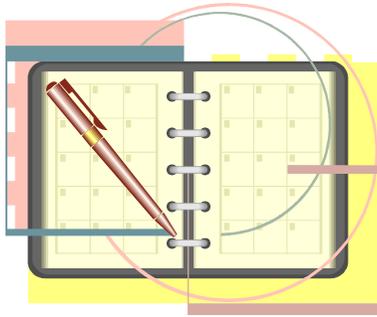
He was born on February 5, 1988, youngest of his siblings; one brother and one sister. He is one to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy; a neurological disorder that causes one to have seizures and affects people of all ages. The experience is unpredictable. Much like when the family car breaks down on a trip to Walt Disney world and you, your loved ones and the car are

sitting on the side of the road. What was earlier on, a happy atmosphere, has quickly turned to anxiety, confusion and even embarrassment. Millions of people around the world have seizures. Millions in the United States live with "active epilepsy." CJ's development of epilepsy was discovered on a family outing at the beach. He was 3 yrs of age sitting at the edge of the water with his Aunt. She watched him as he happily played with a blue ball, chasing after it when the waves pushed it up on the sand bank and erupting with laughter when

"CJ"

Thank you for being a friend
By Brenda Simmons





Executive Director, Annie

Hi Everyone.

Spring is here and we are all incredibly happy. We are still holding our meetings on Zoom Mondays from 9-1 Tuesday Wednesday, Thursday 4-5, and Fridays from 9:30 – 1:30. The best thing is Fridays our meeting comes from Tillie Fowler Park on Roosevelt Blvd. We meet there with our members and Zoom with those who are still not able to attend. We wear our masks in person and follow all the safety rules. The best is that we are together enjoying activities. We play ball and frisbee, do some arts and crafts, have lunch together and finish up with Karaoke. The only thing better will be to find our new location and meet there. Yes, we are looking for a new space to meet and as soon as that happens, we will get ourselves back to meeting every day. We miss everyone soooooo much!!!!!!!

We have some good fundraising events coming up I hope you will participate and support them.

- Ms. Annie

From the President

The effects of COVID have certainly impacted Ben's Place. Our biggest challenge now is finding a new space to serve the individuals who need our assistance. The church where we were located asked us to find a new location last year during the shutdown. As the vaccine is rolled out and we look to safely reopen, the search for a new location is priority #1. It's quite difficult to find an affordable location that meets our needs of being near a bus line and having an outside

area for activities. If you know of a location or someone who can help assist us find a suitable location, we certainly would appreciate any referrals. We are pleased to announce we've added three new board members this year who are generously serving on key committees and projects. Thank you for your continued support of Ben's Place. We will keep you informed as things progress.

- Jay Abraham, President
Ben's Place Board of Directors

“Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, it's at the end of your arm, as you get older, remember you have another hand: The first is to help yourself, the second is to help others.”

— Audrey Hepburn

2021 Fundraisers

Mother's Day Dinner

Saturday/Sunday, May 8th & 9th
<http://bensplacecof.org/happy-mothers-day-gift/>

Online Auction

Fri-Sun July 30th – August 1st

Annual Golf tournament

Friday October 1st
Bent Creek Golf Course

I would love to have some of you join in planning these activities that support our programs. The success of these fundraisers depends on our planning and participation, and this help is essential for success.

- Ms. Annie



cont. Getting to know CJ

the water splashed him drenching him head to toe. In seconds flat CJ's laughter stopped. He fell over and became unresponsive. Emergency came and whisked him away to Nemours children hospital. "Cornelius has experienced a seizure." The Dr. said to the family.

So, from age three thru high school; which he completed and graduated in 2010, CJ battled with seizures. Recall, that seizures are unpredictable.

Living a life of not knowing when an attack would happen, wasn't an easy task for him and fearful for family and friends.

Speaking of friends, after graduation he missed the friends, he had in school; they understood his condition, always gave a helping hand and showed concern; calling to check up on him, on days he would be absent from school. And he in return, would do the same for them. Therefore, to fill his days and make time pass, CJ gained love for video games.

If his mother didn't tell him to give the play station a break, he'd play from dusk to dawn. Sometimes, his mother would witness him sitting in the background watching his older brother and his crew of friends laughing and joking. They would allow him to hang out with them sometimes, not often, because fear of the unknown. "Will he find new friends? Ever go to prom? Have a girlfriend? A job?" These thoughts consumed his Mother's mind, day in and day out. Sporadically, she recalled CJ's love for dogs. She brought one home to him: a puppy German shepherd.

CJ named him "Nemo." On days, that CJ would be gone from home and later return, Nemo would run and meet him at the gate; jumping up on him and simply happy to see him home. Nemo was CJ's best friend. One day CJ was playing with Nemo in the backyard and began to have a seizure. Nemo came to the front door and barked his heart out, gaining the family attention. Mom came out and Nemo took off to the backyard, constantly barking. Mom ran

behind Nemo. She witnessed CJ to be unconscious of what he was doing. His movement was of a robot, as his body bounced back and forth against the fence. The family dog quickly put himself between CJ and the fence causing CJ body to drape over him; like a coat, and from there he carried him to the front door. He entered through the open front door with CJ limp on his back. Nemo did not leave until CJ became responsive, and then seeing he was okay, Nemo wanted back out. "His cuts and scratches from the fence are nothing that a little Neosporin can't handle," the EMT informed mom, after he'd checked CJ over. "It could have been worse, if the dog hadn't been there." He added and rewarded Nemo with a pat on the head when leaving the house saying, "Good dog."

"I want to find me a job, so I can work." CJ began to say months later; on a daily basis.

Miraculously, one day; while stopped at a gas station for fuel, the moment came that we met up with a stranger that offered information that was long overdue. She saw CJ and came over and struck up a friendly conversation. She informed me that she worked with special needs people, inquiring if CJ was a member of any programs.

He was not at the time, and she referred me to Ben's Place. CJ's been a member there for 9 years and plans are to continue to be for as long as they will have him. He was warmly welcomed in by Ms. Annie, her husband Charlie, their daughter Stephanie, and son Brian. The love did not stop there but spewed from the crew that helps the organization run. As for the members of Bens Place, CJ will quickly tell you they are family, not friends. Since being here at Ben's Place CJ has attained: Many friends, Work ethics, created a hand scrub, attended prom (3x) and dreams to one day be a massage Therapist (he has the touch).

The love, care and concern he receives from Ben's Place has been nothing but a pure Blessing. **Thank you, Ben's Place!**



Wills, Trusts and ABLE



A brief review Wills, trusts and ABLE accounts should be part of every families' conversation when planning on how to provide for their loved ones now and into the future. Each piece has its own function, structure and provides different benefits to the family and they work best together. Below is a quick walkthrough on each.

Wills

- Ensures that your money and property are distributed according to your wishes.
- Allows you to set a guardian for your loved one for after you have passed.
- Leaving assets to a loved one receiving government benefits can cause them to lose benefits.
- Avoid this by creating a trust.

Trusts

- Allows you to leave assets to your heirs and avoid probate.
- Special Needs Trust (SNT) can prevent loss of government benefits.
- Three types of Special Needs Trusts, each with a different purpose.

ABLE

- Allows a person receiving benefits to save and invest up to \$15k annually without affecting their benefits.
- Can be used for day-to-day expenses.
- Money grows tax deferred on the growth and comes out tax free if used for the beneficiary.
- Can contribute up to \$100K before it affects Medicare or SSI.

If you would like to learn more, join us for one of our monthly workshops or contact Ben's Place.

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Fun Friday at Tillie Fowler Park!



Thanks to our **Friends of Ben's** with your continued donations. We appreciate your kindness and support.

Legacy of Love Webinar Series Continues

Hosted by Ben's Place Services

You don't want to miss these invaluable webinars! They are free! The first one in the series was amazing! Sign up now. Registration is required.

May 20th @ 6 p.m. – Providing for your loved one after your death.

June 17th @ 6 p.m. – My Book, Letters of Intent

Presented by Lawrence Thompson, Special Needs Advisor and Caroline Emery, Attorney at Law

Register: connect.thrivent.com/lawrence-thompson/events

RSVP: lawrence.thompson@thrivent.com

Just around the corner...

Newsletter Sponsorship

Each year Ben's Place depends on the generosity of our community businesses and families to spread awareness of Ben's Place and our programs. Please consider partnering today with Ben's Place by sponsoring space in our newsletter. Contact David Montgomery at David.montgomery0212@gmail.com or go to <http://bensplacecof.org/> for more details.

Golf Tournament committee kick-off

meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, May 4th at 6 p.m. We need your help!

Co-chairs, Clay Glisson & Emily Pate
904-635-4633 text for Zoom details

Online auction committee kick-off meeting via Zoom on Monday, May 10th at 7 p.m.

Chair, Annie Yarbrough
904-303-5996 for Zoom details

Flamingo Flocking's available. Watch for a kaleidoscope of butterflies coming to lawns near you. <http://bensplacecof.org/flockingafriend/>
You can also order signs for special occasions.

Don't forget Mom! Sliced Pork, Corn on the Cob, Mac and Cheese, & cookie PLUS a gift for Mom!
<http://bensplacecof.org/happy-mothers-day-gift/>

Ben's Place Board of Directors and Staff

1. Jay Abraham – President
2. Jason Gibson – Treasurer
3. Ebony Davis – Director
4. Denise Hunt- Director
5. David Montgomery – Director
6. Emily Pate- Director
7. Lawrence Thompson – Director
8. Debra Waye – Director
9. Anne Yarbrough – Executive Director
10. Stephanie Schuler - Program Director

Contact us at 904-418-2299

or

info@bensplacecof.org



A Favorite Recipe

I entered this recipe in the Clay County Fair when I was little, and I won a Blue Ribbon. It is very simple, and I didn't have to measure things.

Taco Salad

- Bag shredded lettuce
- 1 pound Taco meat cooked
- Chopped tomatoes
- Chopped onions
- Bag shredded cheese
- Taco sauce or salsa
- Can kidney beans rinsed
- Bag of crushed tortilla chips
- Sour cream
- Big bowl & Spoon

Put a layer of each thing in the bowl in order. Top it with sour cream and make it look pretty. Sometimes I put olives, corn, or avocados in it too.

Brian Y (member)

Visit us online at www.bensplacecof.org