



SELF-ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER

Merrick, Inc.



DISABILITY SERVICES DAY AT THE CAPITOL

On Tuesday March 19, 2024 Merrick had a presence of 35 self-advocates at the Capitol in Saint Paul for Disability Services Day. Advocates from all over Minnesota rallied and met with legislators for their rights, needs, and individual pursuits of happiness. For all of that to be achievable, services must improve in quality, quantity, and compensation. Service providers must make a livable wage for the sake of everyone's futures. Self-advocates created their own signs seen throughout the crowds with a wide variety of messages, such as "Support My Supports!" and "Leave My Work Option Alone." The general feeling surrounding the Capitol was that of community, belonging, and progress. Extra appreciation goes to the support staff who joined us on the day and helped coordinate.



Merrick's Bowl-A-Thon 2024

What event has bowling, balloons, pizza, and prizes? Only the most fun-packed fundraiser for Merrick's Self-Advocacy Program. Advocates, families, and community members were invited to bowl, be cheerleaders, enter raffles, request balloon creations, don temporary tattoos, eat pizza, and support Merrick's Self-Advocacy program on Sunday April 21st. Raffle prizes ranged from hobby baskets to local experiences. Thank you to all of the sponsors, volunteers, and Flaherty's Arden Bowl for making this a well anticipated and beloved day every year.



Interview with Sam

On Wednesday April 24th, Self-Advocate, Sam interviewed Assistant Program Directors, Mikaela and Sarah.

Q: How long have you worked for Merrick?

Sarah: For 11 years.

Mikaela: About three years total.

Q: How did you become qualified for this job?

Sarah: I started as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). Then I became a Lead DSP. From there I was promoted to a Program Manager, which became the role of Assistant Program Director (APD).

Mikaela: I started as a summer substitute (DSP) in college. I earned a bachelor's degree in Public Health and became a full-time DSP.

Q: What schools did you go to?

Sarah: Forest Lake High School.

Mikaela: I completed my bachelor's at University of Minnesota Duluth, and Master's at Walden.



Q: When did you start working in the disability services?

Sarah: 20 years ago, on and off. I started in group homes.

Mikaela: In 2017 at Merrick.

Q: How much do you like your job and how long do you plan to work here?

Sarah: I love working at Merrick and hope to retire here.

Mikaela: I like that the work-floor is challenging.

Q: Mikaela, did you and Sarah know each other before working at Merrick?

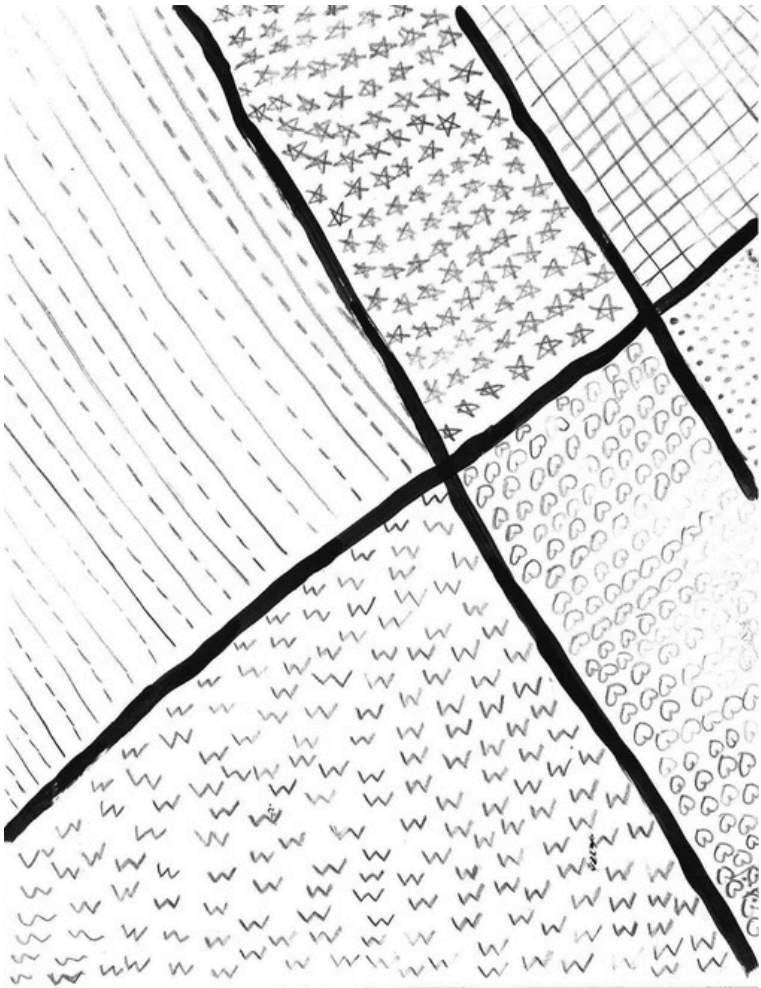
Mikaela: No, we met here when Sarah was a Lead DSP.

Sarah, Sam, and Mikaela posed for a picture after the interview.

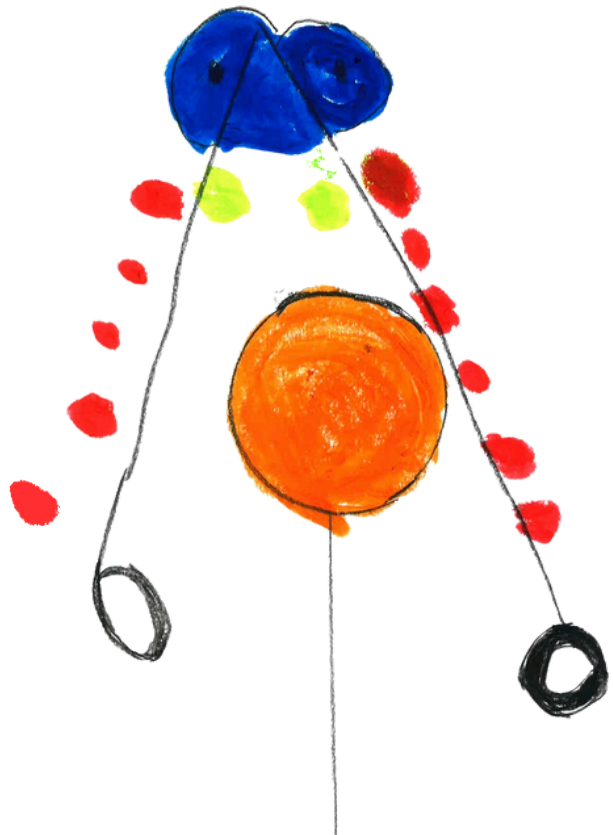
VISUAL ARTWORKS



Aaron



Amy M.



Tim S.



Leigh G.

VISUAL ARTWORKS



Moses C.



Mike M.

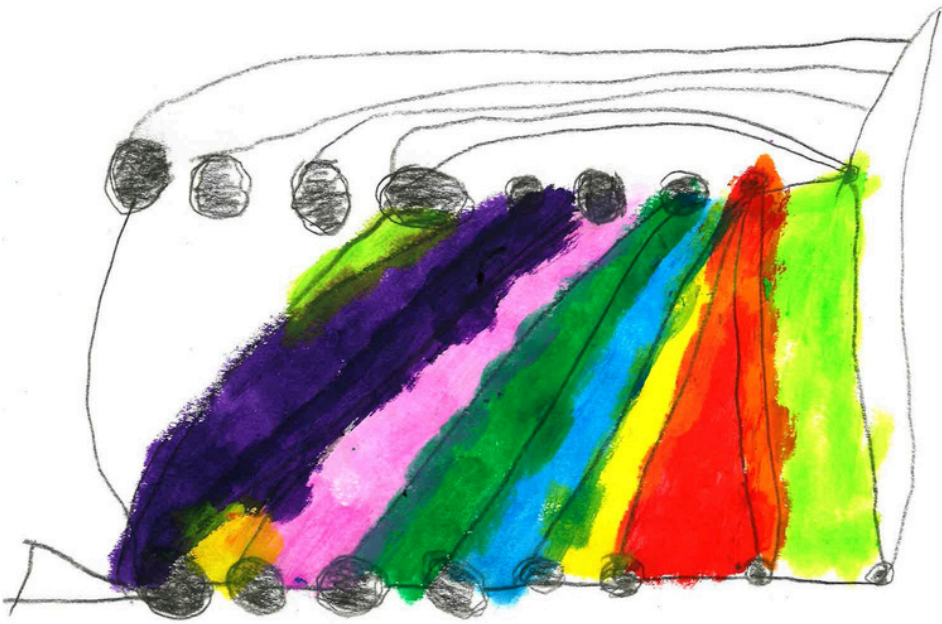


Jane



Katie F.

VISUAL ARTWORKS



Mike H.



Jeni O.



Tierney

Call For Submissions

Do you want your writings and/or artwork in the next newsletter? Below are prompts provided for inspiration. You do not need to fulfill any prompt to submit a poem, short story, joke, drawing, painting, original photograph, vision board, etc. Please submit to Danéa before August 2nd, if you want your work in the Summer edition.

Prompts:

- Where is your favorite place to go in the summer? What do you do there? Who is with you?
- Your favorite summer camp memory.
- Describe 4 sounds, flavors, colors, rhythms or feelings of summer.
- The moment of sunrise or sunset.
- Your favorite flowers or fruits.
- How do you feel when summer ends?

MISCELLANEOUS FUN

Trivia Time

Answers will be revealed during the week of July 29th. Share guesses at any self-advocacy meeting.

- 1) Approximately how long does a watermelon take to grow?
- 2) Name three cars (make, model, year) from the 1978 film Grease.
- 3) What are two constellations that can be seen from Minnesota during the summer months?

- 4) According to Explore Minnesota, what famous movies were filmed in Minnesota?
- 5) Approximately how fast are the winds of the strongest tornados?

Fact Attack!

The spring equinox marks the start of six months of both uninterrupted daylight in the North Pole and, uninterrupted darkness in the South Pole.

Scavenger Hunt

For the next few months record (photograph, draw/paint, journal, etc.) your sensory experience of the following:

Rainbow

Fire Truck

Lily Pads

Waterfall

Blue or Green Door

Red or Orange Railings

Another Planet

Cloud Shaped like an Animal

Bumble Bee on a Pink or Orange Flower

Poetry or a Quote on a Bench or Sidewalk

(Remember: Safety First)

Would You Rather

Circle the choice you would rather pick based on the given scenario.

Scenario: You are planning a vacation with an unlimited budget and all necessary accommodations; would you rather travel...

a) to a beach resort with an all inclusive spa package

b) to New Zealand to visit the Shire (Hobbiton) from the Lord of the Ring films

c) to see the Seven Wonders of the World

d) nowhere/stay-cation

*Note: options a-c are pictured to the left.



photo: <https://travel.usnews.com/gallery/top-beach-resorts-around-the-world?slide=12>

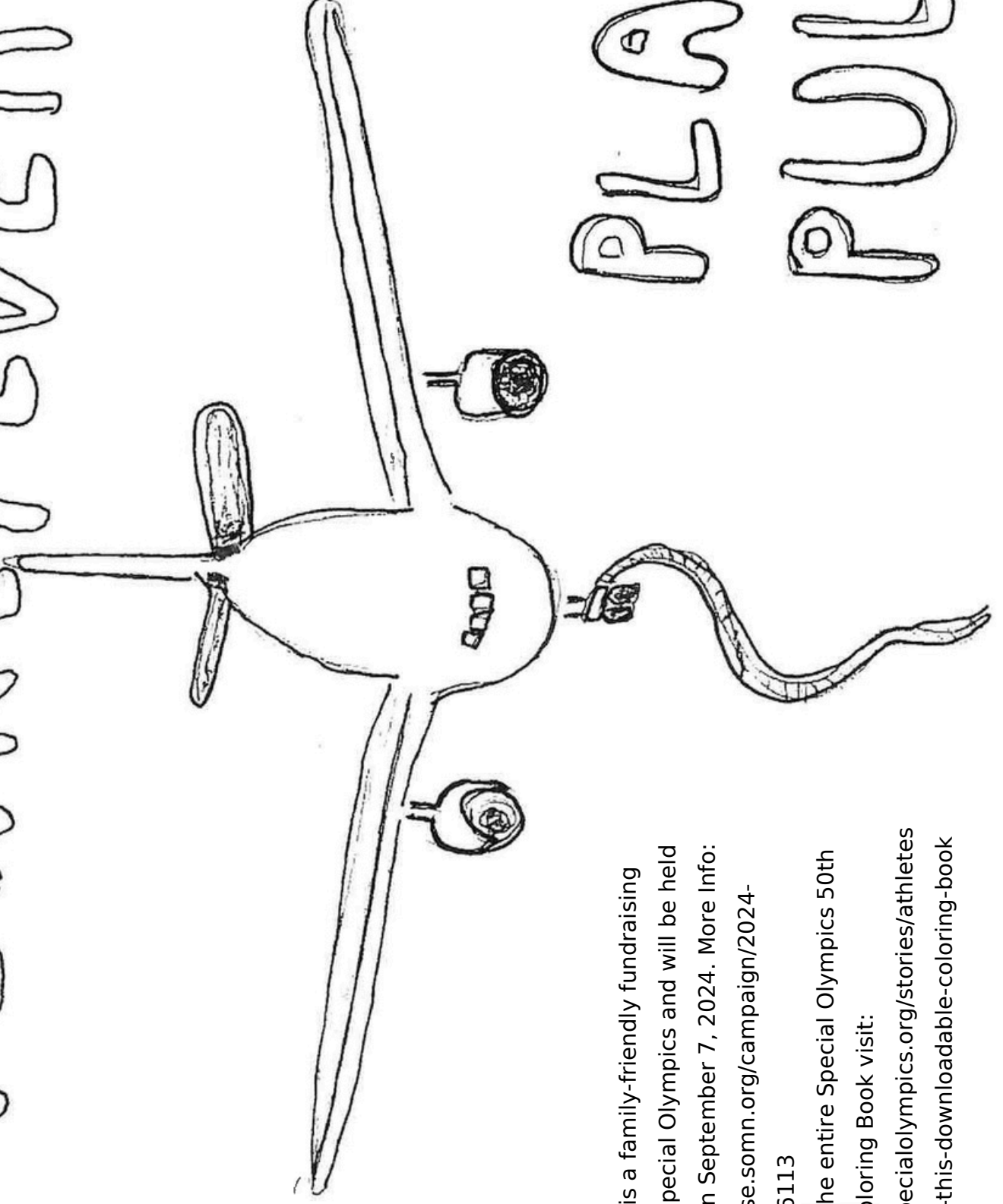


photo: <https://www.newzealand.com/in/n/plan/business/hobbiton-movie-set-tours/>



photo: <https://www.archdaily.com/885087/the-new-york-times-takes-us-to-the-new-7-wonders-of-the-world-with-360-videos>

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PLANE PULL

The Plane Pull is a family-friendly fundraising event for the Special Olympics and will be held in Minnesota on September 7, 2024. More Info: <https://fundraise.somn.org/campaign/2024-plane-pull/c556113>

To download the entire Special Olympics 50th Anniversary Coloring Book visit: <https://www.specialolympics.org/stories/athletes-have-fun-with-this-downloadable-coloring-book>