

July 5, 2022

How We Became More Independent During COVID ... Really!



Jay Testa, right, with housemate David Baker, outside the home they share in Bath.

David Cowing, a retired special educator and IA parent for many years, says that the pandemic helped his son, **Jay Testa**, learn new skills and increase his independence. What a surprising outcome!

In David's words:

"For over 20 years, he's come to our house every weekend. When he couldn't do that [because of pandemic precautions] it was tough, but it was a great opportunity for him to discover that he could be perfectly happy at his home. Now we have to convince him to visit! He likes where he lives and who he lives with and he's just like his sister – he doesn't want to spend all his weekends with his parents."

David continues: "Thanks to staff support, he's also developed better phone skills and become very adept at Zooming. He wants to remain in touch and now he connects with us 2-3 times a week.

"If our primary focus is increasing levels of independence, this experience allowed him to gain greater independence from us. The pandemic really reinforced my sense of how important the work of Independence Association is."

Mowing His Way to Independence

William “Eli” Morgan III is diagnosed with a moderate developmental delay, and he displayed a great deal of self-advocacy and determination for several months telling his parents, “All I want for my 15th birthday is a riding lawn mower.”

He spent several months looking online for used lawn tractors and asking his parents quite frequently for one. Like most parents, they were a little hesitant because of safety concerns.



When his birthday came, his parents fulfilled his wish and got him a John Deere mower for his birthday. After a long discussion about safety, he set out on his first lawn moving adventure.

Case manager **Inga Russell** says, "This is an amazing story of self-advocacy, perseverance, and building a skill in safety, independence, and maybe when he is older a vocational skill." Thanks to mom **Jolene Morgan** for permission to share the story and for the photo of William with his gift!

Netflix Watchers are Visiting Spindleworks!



*Above, host **Phil Rosenthal** greets his cousin **Anna McDougal** outside the Spindleworks building in Brunswick during the program's shooting last fall.*

Ever since the quirky food and travel show "[Somebody Feed Phil](#)" on Netflix ran a show that features Spindleworks, the store has been humming with new sales and visitors.

More than 30 new online sales per week have been sparked by the show since the season opened. Spindleworks resident artists earn 65% of the sale price of their works, so that's income to our creators as well as ongoing support to the studios. A friend of the studio is helping us keep up with the demand by posting lots and lots of new work in the [online store](#).

Gallery visits are also up, as show fans have added Spindleworks to their list of Maine "must see" sites. Senior Program Manager **Brian Braley** says the show has accounted for roughly 25 new visitors every week.

Join Us July 8
Brunswick is Closing Lincoln St
for the Spindleworks Block Party

Enjoy:

Music by the **Leopard Girls**, back from their triumphant engagement at the Spindleworks opening at Maine Art Gallery in Wiscasset.

Lots of art inside and outdoors!

Hang out with our artists!

4-7 pm
7-9 Lincoln St.



Get Your Art Here!

Spindleworks is arguably the most well-known of the Home- and Community-Based Services offered by Independence Association. Founded more than 40 years ago, it is an arts residency program that allows artists with intellectual and developmental disabilities to grow their creativity and vision in the company of professional artists, who serve as their mentors. Spindleworks maintains two studios, one at 7 Lincoln St. in Brunswick and the other co-located with **The Harlow** in Hallowell.



Some of the current work on sale at the 7 Lincoln St. gallery, open 9-4 weekdays.

See and shop the work of our Spindleworks artists at these locations:

Spindleworks, Brunswick - Ongoing show and sale, with special extended hours for July 8 block party.

Maine Art Gallery, Wiscasset - Show and sale closes this weekend. News stories from [Wiscasset Newspaper](#) and [Maine Art Scene](#) [here!](#)

The Harlow, Hallowell. Spindleworks artists frequently show in the curated and juried exhibits, and also have work in the sales gallery.

McKeen Center, Bowdoin College Brunswick - Ongoing show and sale. [News story here!](#)

Dermatology Associates, Brunswick - Ongoing show and sale

Get Your Copy of Our 55th Anniversary History!

If you're bored by history, you'll love this professionally written story about how local families created and sustained a home- and community-based alternative to institutionalization for their children. Buy it online at the [Spindleworks store](#) or in person at [Gulf of Maine books](#) in Brunswick.



Our mission: To assist adults and children with disabilities in obtaining full and inclusive lives in their chosen communities.

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