

Our Impact

Visual and speech impairments are common among our participants, as are severe physical, intellectual and cognitive disabilities. For this reason we work closely with caregivers in small group settings, emphasizing one-on-one interactions where volunteers and residents get “totally in the moment.” Our client sites have found these interactions to be powerful motivators for residents working toward their occupational therapy and speech improvement goals.

“Lack of motivation stands as a powerful obstacle between developmentally disabled adults and their growth ... A dog can come up ... and the person can touch it, initiating a movement that may achieve an occupational therapy goal. Engaging them in functional movements may help them with basic activities of daily living such as reaching out for a cup, or putting their arm into a sleeve. The Nature Connection brings joy and excitement, along with initiation and movement. It’s the biggest best thing we can give to people aside from basic food and housing.”

Emily Firor

Director | Minute Man Arc Day Habilitation (Concord, MA)



Upon hearing that a tortoise, Whisper, has no ability to hear and “hears” via vibrations, Jane responds, “Just like me. Just like me.”

Jane

Program Participant, Minuteman Arc



“The children in our school have serious neurologic and emotional disabilities, and each [child] experiences the world in an individual and unique way. The sensitive support and attention your staff provide allows for an unfolding of curiosity and awareness of our natural surroundings Your work enhances and complements *our* work.”

Nancy Fuller

Executive Director

Community Therapeutic Day School



Jaime, a boy with cerebral palsy, responding to a hedgehog: “IEy hes cee pee,” [We are unable to understand and ask him to repeat.] “No, I seyed ‘hhe haths cee pee.” “He has CP?” “Yes!” Finally, we realize that Jaime is making a connection between the hedgehog, that startles or jumps as a warning, and himself.

Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital/Massachusetts Hospital School
