



Together We Bloom 1st Annual Newsletter

It's been just over one year since Together We Bloom (TWB) was founded, and **what a year it has been!** We've grown our incredible community and made significant strides in our mission to empower kids with disabilities and their families through more equitable access to connection, communication, and community.

We know this is just the beginning of the work to be done and we're feeling more inspired than ever to make our towns accessible, equitable, and inclusive for individuals with disabilities.

What we've done:

In our first year, TWB...

- Provided numerous children with disabilities and their families, from racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with **neurodiversity-affirming speech-language therapy and caregiver consultations**
- Launched our **disability inclusivity workshops and consultations** for local schools, organizations, and businesses
- Provided **over \$3,000 of sliding scale scholarships**, making our SLP services more equitable and accessible for **50% of our clients**
- Designed, implemented **accessibility & inclusivity initiatives for Maplewood Porchfest**, including social stories, a sensory-friendly quiet room, and a communication board
- Launched a monthly multidisciplinary **support and action group for professionals** committed to disability justice and intersectional anti-ableism practices

To learn more and support this vital work
please visit our website:

www.TogetherWeBloom.org

Where we're headed:

In the next year, with the support of our community, TWB will...

- Expand access to speech-language therapy with ongoing **sliding scale scholarships**
- Increase the **inclusion and accessibility of more SOMA events**, including the North Jersey Pride Festival
- Facilitate **neurodiversity-affirming social playgroups** for Neurodivergent children and their families
- Partner with SOMA Peer Support + Action Network for IEP Families on **initiatives to broaden the local equity conversation** to include neurodiversity and disability, as well as the intersection of disability with race, gender identity, and other marginalized groups
- Expand **partnerships with local schools and businesses** to be more accessible and inclusive to individuals with disabilities



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Maplewood Porchfest to Include Sensory-Friendly Quiet Room at DeHart for Neurodivergent Neighbors

The 6th Annual Maplewood Porchfest takes place Sunday, Sept. 3 in the Hilton neighborhood.

Written By Mary Barr Mann September 1, 2023

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When the 6th Annual Maplewood Porchfest takes over the Hilton neighborhood on Sunday, September 3, there will be a place for everyone to enjoy the event.

That includes neurodivergent adults and children who will be able to visit a sensory-friendly quiet room available inside DeHart Community Center hosted by Together We Bloom (TWB), a local non-profit run by Executive Director Kim Takacs, MS, CCC.



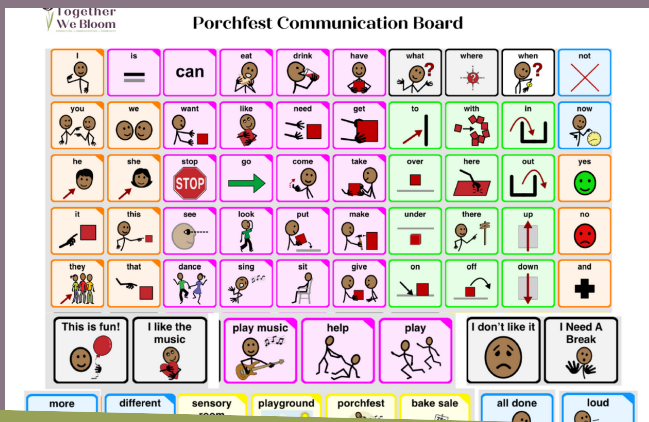
TWB Porchfest Sensory Inclusive Quiet Room

Highlights from Together We Bloom's 1st Year!

Client Testimonials

"TWB provides a framework that allows parents to take delight in their kids and recognizes their superpowers as awe inspiring, not a hurdle to overcome. That distinction allows for joy and the acceptance to know, in your heart, that your child is exactly perfect just the way they are. **TWB works with the child - and the adults around them - to grow the capacity to help them express their beauty in the best way possible.** Working with TWB has been a game changer for our family."

-- Parent of Autistic Child & TWB Client



Accessibility resources available to the community for free at www.togetherwebloom.org/PorchfestInclusivity

I'm Going to Maplewood Porchfest



A Social Story of Music, Community, and Belonging



"Together We Bloom has been working with my family for over a year and has been an amazing partner in my son's communication and language journey. The organization's commitment to provide a flexible scaling fee for services has allowed us access to thoughtful and meaningful practices that we would not otherwise have. Kim has met our son where he is at, built trust and...[this] has allowed him to find his voice and decrease his frustrations and increase his pride. **My only wish is that more families can have access to her services!**"

--Parent of Autistic Toddler & TWB Sliding Scale Scholarship Recipient