VOICE OF VARIETY
Dear Friends of Variety,

Our Fall programs are already well underway. Our Philadelphia After School Programs are full of kids and young adults who are getting homework help, learning to cook and even practicing martial arts! Our programs in Worcester are teaching our kids vocational skills with an emphasis on socialization and education about the world around them.

This issue highlights why our programs are so important to the kids and families we serve by focusing on some of our success stories. Whether it is four of our most recent PYN Summer Work Ready program participants being hired by their summer job placement sites or a regular attendee of our Overnight Camp winning a Silver and 2 Bronze medals in the Rio Paralympic games, Variety continues to build independence and self-confidence in children with disabilities.

If you have any questions, concerns or just want to chat about anything Variety, please feel free to contact me via email at angus.murray@varietyphila.org or phone (610) 584-4366 x 203. Thanks for all the support you have provided and continue to provide to our kids!

Sincerely,

Angus Murray
CEO
Variety – the Children’s Charity of the Greater Philadelphia Region

---

Thank You!

It was a great month for golf and for Variety. We want to thank the Vince and Betty Mariniello Foundation and the Philadelphia section of the PGA for organizing the Pro Am Tournament of Champions as well as the Cassidy family for inviting us to the Thomas J. Cassidy Memorial Golf Outing. We also want to thank anyone who attended either of these events. They were a huge benefit to Variety and we look forward to participating in them in the future. It’s organizations like these who help us in our mission to build self-confidence and independence in children with disabilities.
Variety Alum’s Journey to Rio

Amanda McGrory grew up just like any other 5-year-old. She spent her time running around and playing sports with her friends, until October 19th, 1991 when everything changed. Amanda woke up, brushed her teeth, and began to walk downstairs like any other morning, but she began to feel her leg muscles tighten. Something in her body triggered a rare neurological disorder called transverse myelitis that affects the spinal cord. Only 1 in 6 million people worldwide are diagnosed with this disease and 1/3 of those diagnosed make a good or full recovery.

However, Amanda would not recover and never regained the use of her legs. The next few years were difficult and confusing. How could any 5-year-old comprehend losing the ability to walk for seemingly no reason? She had to change schools and found it difficult to make new friends. Things began to look up when she found Variety. Living on her own for 3 weeks was something she didn’t realize she was capable of until she experienced our camp. It was also a huge boost for her to make friends with other kids with disabilities. They showed her it was possible with a little creativity to do all the things she did before her injury.

With her new-found confidence Amanda began a journey on her path to stardom. Her passion for sports led her to begin racing, for fun at first, and then competitively. Her instinct to never settle for mediocrity helped her excel at an early point in her career. However, at 14 she was diagnosed with severe scoliosis that required a spinal fusion and doctors warned her she would probably never race again.

Fast-forward a few years later and Amanda McGrory was attending the University of Illinois on scholarship. She went on to win 3 national championships as part of the wheelchair basketball team and she has won over 22 racing marathons worldwide. By far her most impressive athletic achievement is her multiple medals in the Paralympics, including a gold in the 2008 Beijing women’s 5000m race. In the 2016 Rio Paralympics, Amanda won a Bronze in the Women’s Marathon and 5000m events as well as a Silver in the Women’s 1500m.

Amanda was a typical 5-year-old until a life-altering, rare disease took away the use of her legs. At first she was disheartened, but with the confidence she found at Variety, she discovered what she was capable of in the world of racing and in life. With extensive rehab she not only resumed racing, but achieved the highest honor in the athletic field for her performances. The people she met and lessons she learned here at Variety molded her into a world-class athlete and caring person. The girl who was never supposed to race again ended up a gold medal winner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tournament of Champions</td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td>Cassidy Golf Outing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sat. Social (Restaurant Manners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>Socialization Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Coming in October

**Oktober Fest Firkin 5K**

Get your Oktoberfest on with Variety at the Firkin 5K. A firkin is a 9 gallon keg of naturally fermented beer and there will be plenty available after the 5K race. The event will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 15, 2016 and is being held in partnership with the PennSuburban Chamber of Commerce. The 5K will start at White’s Road Park in Lansdale. Along with the run, there will be a number of vendors, attractions, and ways to celebrate Oktobertfest in style. So, enjoy the race and raise a stein to Variety (must be 21+ years of age to drink.) You can sign up for the Firkin 5k here: [http://varietyphila.org/what-we-do/events/](http://varietyphila.org/what-we-do/events/)

**Fall Fest**

On Thursday, October 29 you’re invited to our annual Fall Fest at the Variety Club Camp and Developmental Center. From 2pm-6pm there will be face painting, pumpkin painting, karaoke, seasonal snacks, cupcake decorating a costume contest, and a special Trick or Treat experience. Don’t miss out on one of the best ways to celebrate fall. More updates will be available on our website soon.
Four PYN Youths Find Jobs

The Philadelphia Youth Network’s (PYN) summertime Transition to Work program once again proved successful in preparing kids for the workforce. Niesha Faison, Shalonda Crafton, Shaniya Crafton, and Rahmir Jubilee all received job offers from ShopRite of Snyder Plaza in Philadelphia after participating in the PYN program. The students did exceptional work for 6 weeks during the summer as part of the program before they were officially offered positions. The Transition to Work program is designed to support the healthy transition of youth with both physical and developmental disabilities from high school to work by matching their skills with positions at an assortment of locations. The program offers 120 hours of paid work experience at 4 locations: Methodist/Jefferson Hospital, Abraham Lincoln HS, Tindley Temple, and ShopRite. These students are the 4 latest success stories to come out of the program.

Holiday Bazaar

Keep it on your calendar! **Saturday, November 12** we will be hosting a Holiday Bazaar in our gymnasium. From 9am-3pm there will be 40 or more vendors selling their unique crafts and gifts. We will also be selling food and drink with all the proceeds benefitting Variety. You can find more information on our website (http://varietyphila.org/what-we-do/events/fundraisers/holiday-bazaar/) and there’s still plenty of time to sign up to be vendor. Our Bazaar is a great way to get a head start on your holiday shopping and the creative vendors offer a great selection of gifts and stocking-stuffers for anyone on your list. Whether you’re looking to be a shopper or vendor save the date and help us support children with disabilities.
The help we offer children and families is only possible because of the help we receive from donors. The generous contributions from individuals and corporations allows us to continue the work we’ve been doing for over 50 years. Anything you can contribute will directly benefit at least one child in some way. Visit our website to learn even more on the ways you can help us help the communities we all live, work and play in.