

Joanne Haibon's interest in biology led her to St. Joseph's College and a program that provides educational support. The Glickman Lauder Center will continue to support her the rest of the way.

Building Blocks
Impact and Innovation from the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence
Spring 2025
MaineHealth

Ready for Her Next Step

Joanne Haibon Receives the Support She Needs from The Glickman Lauder Center

Joanne Haibon is a special young woman. Ten years ago, she was the first student to attend school at the Center of Excellence in Autism and Developmental Disorders (CADD), the forerunner of the Glickman Lauder Center. This May, Joanne was the first student to graduate from the Integrated Studies Program at St. Joseph's College in Standish, Maine, where she earned a certificate for two years of successful study.

The fact is, Joanne, who is 26, has interests—notably biology. "I took Introduction to Biology," she says. "The teachers are very nice, and I had a peer partner who helped me by taking notes. I wish the classes would keep going."

Her mother appreciates the fact that Joanne is realistic. "She's excited about her next step," says Mary Haibon. "We talk about her disappointment in leaving school, but there's a new chapter opening up. Joanne is an amazing person to me—the reason I'm optimistic, and the reason I believe in resilience and hope."

College became an option

Kimberly Loika-Smith, clinical director, remembers Joanne when she was 16—and the only student at CADD. "Joanne had a great personality and was funny, so she was able to connect with people. At the same time, she was struggling with intrusive thoughts." The psychiatrist who was working with CADD evaluated Joanne and diagnosed her as having schizoaffective

Continued on page 3

Glickman Lauder Center Update

Spring is here, and so is the new issue of *Building Blocks*. The issue shines a light on our ongoing expansion in services for adults with developmental disorders, including autism. An increased number of adults are coming to the center; we have a dedicated team of specialists, which you can read about on page 4. Parents and caregivers benefit from a therapeutic group where they learn skills together, which they can then use with their adult sons or daughters.

On the cover, we feature Joanne Haibon, a bright young woman who was the first person to graduate from St. Joseph College's Integrated Studies Program. Joanne and her mother describe how, beginning ten years ago, Joanne came to the Center of Excellence in Autism and Developmental Disorders (CADD), the forerunner of the Glickman Lauder Center. She continues to receive all the care and supports she needs.

Five years ago, in 2020, the covid-19 pandemic caused businesses, schools and institutions to close. Despite that, we forged onward with a campaign to raise support for the future we hoped to see: a state-of-the-art facility in Maine that provides comprehensive care and services to individuals with autism and developmental disorders throughout the lifespan. We knew that more than 40,000 families in Maine needed services; the generous support was overwhelming.

In the spring of 2021, the ribbon was cut, opening the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence. What a journey it has been. It continues with our goal of providing specialized, state-of-the-art services, shaped by innovation, across the lifespan.

Thank you for supporting the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence.

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With the Preschool Art Fair a few weeks away, John Fallon, four, was busy completing his painting. The Glickman Lauder Center's annual art fair presents art created by students in its three preschool classes. The show opened on May 2.

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To learn more about MaineHealth Behavioral Health and the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence or to schedule a visit to see the difference you make through your support of our mission, please contact us.

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Ready for Her Next Step (continued from cover)

disorder, which combines symptoms of schizophrenia with those of bipolar disorder or depression. She has regular appointments with Danielle Sipsock, MD, psychiatrist, who has managed her care for the past four years.

Still, Joanne is sometimes overstimulated by things she can't control. "But she doesn't stay in her room, doesn't stop living and pursues what she wants to do," says Mary. "I think Joanne is able to manage all the stress that life has put on her because she receives so much support from the Glickman Lauder Center. We have been blessed to be with Kim for ten years. She has been so great in supporting Joanne."

Support from the Glickman Lauder Center and encouragement from her family led Joanne to pursue the interests she has developed—human biology, but also marine biology—and she began talking about college. "We didn't think college would an option for her, but we heard about the program at St. Joseph's College and attended information day," says Mary. "What they've put in place is a wonderful way to support students who want to be in the classroom."

Joanne had a peer partner with her in every class. The goal is for the student to participate in the classroom experience while learning to work with others and gaining a valuable education.

The End of School Means the Beginning Of a Career

Then there's Joanne's job. She works part-time at Smitty's Theater in Windham, where the Haibons live. "I clock in and begin updating menus and cleaning all the surfaces, sort of getting the place ready," she says. "I get free popcorn and soda—and I get to see movies for free." Joanne has a job coach at Smitty's who helps her to stay focused and ignore distractions.

Now that her classes are over, Joanne is considering adding another job, perhaps at St. Joseph's. "I've done internships there twice, so I know my way around," she notes. "I might be able to work in the mailroom."

Joanne has become interested in earning more money, says Mary. "She wants to be able to take care of herself. Joanne has talked about how the end of school means the beginning of her career. She wants to have a job like everybody else. She's always been fascinated by the human body and marine biology—and in protecting ocean life."

Those who know Joanne won't be surprised to see her continue to pursue those interests. "When I think about Joanne at 16 and how she is today, at 26, it's incredible," says Kim. "Her level of maturity, ability to self-reflect and have insight and her ability to use coping skills have all significantly improved. Today she's able to do things like have a job, go to classes and attend events with her family.



When it's time for Smitty's Cinema in Windham to open, Joanne Haibon is on the job, cleaning surfaces and updating the menus.

"It's true that Joanne can become anxious when interacting socially with people she doesn't know—that's something that is true for many people with autism," says Kim. "I do think that might change; she will continue to mature and feel more comfortable with who she is in the world."

Joanne likes knowing that Kim is there. "She's cool," says Joanne. "If I have issues that need to be solved, I feel like I want to talk with Kim."

Her family is grateful. "It's not just about how Joanne has been supported—first by CADD and now by the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence," Mary says. "As a family, we've learned how to support Joanne, how to support each other and how to stay together. I think Joanne would have given up a long time ago if we didn't have that kind of support—people who taught us to move forward, to understand that there are opportunities for Joanne and that she has a right to them, just like everyone else.

"I'm thrilled to share how successful Joanne has been," her mother says. "It's what parents and family members need to hear: that there are positive stories and a lot of good things happening."

Into Adulthood: Treatment and Support Across the Lifespan

Services Are Expanding at the Glickman Lauder Center

The number of children who were diagnosed with autism markedly increased, beginning more than 20 years ago. As those children become adults, they continue to need treatment and support. At the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence, the adult clinic is growing; services are expanding to meet the need.

"We understand that autism is a lifelong condition, and that people with autism will continue to benefit from ongoing support throughout their lives," says Cathleen Small, PhD, BCBA-D, director of outpatient behavioral services. "This includes help with social inclusion, independent living and mental health—notably, integrated care that addresses both autism and mental health conditions."

Dr. Small has joined a growing team of specialists who work together to care for the increased number of adults. Among others, the group includes Winston Chung, MD, psychiatrist; Miles Cleary, LICSW, social worker; and Kimberly Loika-Smith, clinical director.

Groups Are In Demand

According to Kimberly, focus groups conducted by Glickman Lauder Center staff last year were designed to achieve two goals. "First, we wanted to provide education on our treatment model at the center so that families understand what our center can provide. Second, we asked parents and caregivers to describe their priorities." Two of the items that emerged include a desire for more connection among other adults with autism, and for caregivers to have increased opportunities for connection with each other.

"We've noticed how, even in the waiting room, caregivers will develop their own groups while their children—or adults—are participating in treatment," Kimberly notes. With clear evidence from the focus groups that caregiver connection is important, a new group was formed earlier this year. The weekly Caregiver Group covers topics that include: the lifespan waiver, which explains access to Medicaid coverage; adult case management services; health and quality of life in autistic adults; online safety; and activity schedules.

"This new, six-week group features the expertise we have in our building and brings in speakers from outside who can address important topics," says Kimberly, who oversees another topic covered in the Caregiver Group: PEERS Social Skills Training Overview. The UCLA PEERS (Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills) is one of the therapeutic groups that debuted at the Glickman Lauder Center during the past year.



(Left to right) Tami Goldsmith and Kelly Staples recently attended the Caregiver Group, a six-week group that connects the caregivers of adult patients.

"We launched a PEERS group for adults earlier this year, and it has been very successful," says Kimberly. "Seven families enrolled—young adults between 18 and 25 who can tolerate a 90-minute group, along with their caregivers. The young adults participate in making weekly calls to another group member so they can practice the conversation skills they are learning. The caregivers provide social coaching, both during the call and out in the real world. We encourage them to do role-plays and practice between group sessions."

Kimberly runs the caregiver group. "They're a wonderful group of parents who really care about each other and the success of the young adults in the group," she notes. "We are helping those young adults refine their social skills, as this is something they will need as they continue to go through life."

The Glickman Lauder Center staff is focused on covering all the bases that support adults with autism. That includes becoming involved in quality improvement initiatives and launching research to support them (see page 6). Dr. Chung is now a full-time psychiatrist at the center, and Dr. Small—also full-time—brings a wealth of expertise in treating behavior (see page 5).

It is clear that effective treatment, including participation in groups, can lead to an increased ability to communicate and self-advocate, to navigate social situations and, in general, greater confidence. "At the center, we are tailoring our services to meet the needs of our adult patients," says Dr. Small.

Cathleen Small, PhD, BCBA-D, Helps Patients—and Families—To Focus on Meaningful Goals

Cathleen Small, PhD, BCBA-D, is a psychologist and behavior analyst with more than 25 years of experience working with individuals with autism and other developmental disorders in a variety of settings. After earning a doctoral degree in psychology, she completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.



"Progress is going to look different for different people," says Cathleen Small, PhD, BCBA-D, director of outpatient behavioral services.

Describe how your role has shifted to serving as director of outpatient behavioral services at the Glickman Lauder Center.

I have enjoyed the transition to providing full-time outpatient care, working closely with our team of psychologists and behavioral analysts to expand our services for adult patients. I work individually with patients and their families or caregivers to address behavioral symptoms and concerns. Our behavioral services are designed to be short-term and focused on a particular goal, for which we monitor progress over time.

The need has grown for caregivers who specialize in adults.

Yes, and we have improved our understanding of autism across the lifespan. Historically, many autism services have focused exclusively on children. The last several years has seen a growing awareness of, and focus on, the needs of adults. It is an evolving field. We are seeing more adults at the Glickman Lauder Center, and we are tailoring services for them, from the PEERS [Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills] therapeutic group, which enhances social skills, to the specialized behavioral health care we provide.

What led you to the field of caring for individuals with developmental disorders?

After completing my undergraduate degree in psychology, I worked at a residential school in Massachusetts for individuals who had a range of developmental disorders and challenging behavior. I fell in love with the students and the work. Once I received training in behavior analysis, which is focused on helping individuals develop and maintain skills that improve their quality of life and independence, I was able to see the significant impact it had on people's lives.

Once we help individuals with their communication skills, daily living skills and emotional and behavioral skills, they can participate meaningfully in their homes, their communities and their schools—and live the most independent lives possible.

Can individuals expect to experience a greater degree of success in terms of their independence than used to be possible?

Progress is going to look different for different people. What we focus on is the current goal, and then the next goal and the next goal. For one person, this might be learning to communicate the things they need or activities they want, whether it's a hug from a parent or a drink. Others might work toward being able to attend their own medical or dental appointments safely. Still others want to attend college successfully with (or without) support, live independently in a home, obtain and maintain employment or develop and sustain meaningful personal relationships.

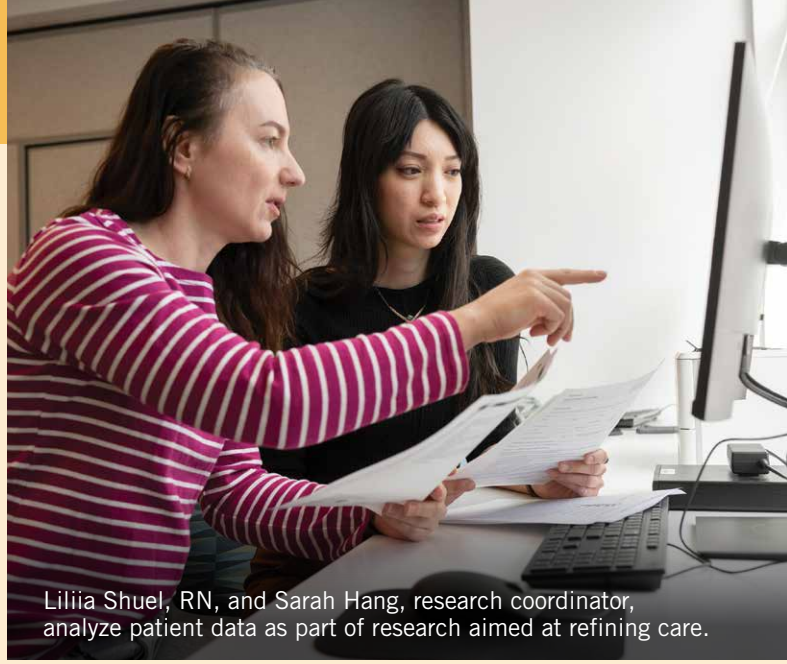
Do families and caregivers look to you for reassurance?

The reassurance comes when we're working with families on the defined goal, and we're moving toward reaching that next goal. When we reach it, we'll celebrate that and work on the next goal. We support individuals toward continued movement forward and increased independence. During their lives, they will face new and sometimes unexpected challenges; we're here to provide the support, guidance and therapy they need.

You clearly find it satisfying to work with these individuals.

I really enjoy working with individuals with autism, and with their families, across the lifespan. There is so much variability among the patients I see: how they present themselves and the range of their strengths and needs. I enjoy working with patients and families to identify the meaningful changes they hope to see—and to work toward reaching those goals. I love learning from individuals with autism: about autism, human diversity and social connectedness.

Research and Quality Improvement Are Combined at Glickman Lauder Center



Liliia Shuel, RN, and Sarah Hang, research coordinator, analyze patient data as part of research aimed at refining care.

Patients Are Encouraged to Check MyChart Prior to All Visits

Research plays an important role in shaping effective care and ongoing support for those with developmental disorders. That continues to be true at the Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence, where the staff conducts national research studies and initiates quality improvement activities aimed at refining care, including for the adult population.

"The number of adults with autism is growing, as is the size of our adult clinic," notes Melanie Hounchell, research program director. "We are looking to explore—and expand into—adult research."

Current research underway is focused on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)—found in approximately 50 percent of those with autism—and sleep problems. "We are part of a national, randomized clinical trial of medications approved to treat ADHD in normally developing individuals, but not yet studied in autism," says Melanie. "It is a pragmatic trial, based on the defined standard of care, so the physician decides which medication at what dose and formulation. The study will see if there is a difference in effectiveness and side effects among the various ADHD medications."

Another initiative asks that parents complete the Vanderbilt Rating Scale, which is used to assess ADHD symptoms, every 90 days. "By gathering data from caregivers, we can establish a baseline of how our patients with ADHD are doing," she says. "This real-time data can then be used to make practice changes—quality improvement—in the clinic population."

Sleep is another concern for many children and adults with autism. Briana Taylor, PhD, who is affiliated with MaineHealth, has a research interest in circadian rhythms. She is studying changes in sleep and behavior over time in children with autism. The Glickman Lauder Center also expects to participate in a national study on sleep. "We are waiting to learn if funding to look at the effectiveness of sleep medications has been approved," says Melanie.

Research that Focuses on Quality Improvement

There are certain behaviors that concern families because they put those with autism at risk. Elopement is when an individual wanders away from a safe, supervised area. "Approximately 50 percent of families report that their children run off or bolt without permission, which could lead to harm or injury," Melanie explains. "The family might be at the mall, and the child runs off. It affects their daily lives, because they hesitate to bring the child along with them when they go places."

Glickman Lauder Center staff are in the design phase of an elopement screening, assessment and prevention program to be implemented for all the center's patients. "It will be a comprehensive program," says Melanie, who will be joined by Nichole Goldfeder and Sarah Hang, research coordinators. "Based on the results of the screening and assessment, we might suggest use of trackers, locks for doors or seatbelt buckles, or referral to a behavioral therapist."

The center's commitment to quality improvement—assuring that diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support is first-rate—requires the ongoing collection of information on patient outcomes. "By collecting this information, such as with the Vanderbilt scale or on quality of life, we can measure the impact our care is having. This allows us to provide better care."

Patients and their families are encouraged to check the individual's MyChart account before every provider visit to see if there are any forms or questionnaires to complete prior to the visit. "We are eager to see how our patients' symptoms are changing over time," Melanie adds. "This helps to inform the care we provide and shape the research we will perform."

Check MyChart Before Each Visit

MyChart

The Glickman Lauder Center relies on the information provided by patients and families who complete questionnaires found on MyChart. Please check your MyChart account prior to every visit. If you need assistance, including with activation, call 855-255-2300.

A Father's Devotion: Ben Berry's Generosity Is Inspired by His Son



Ben Berry is optimistic about his son, Connor's, future thanks to the care and support he has received at the Glickman Lauder Center.

It is difficult enough for parents to realize that their child has autism. When their son, Connor, still wasn't speaking at age three, Ben and Natashia Berry suspected that was the case. That was four years ago, and the covid shutdown was in place. After Connor was diagnosed, resources and support seemed non-existent.

Ben Berry found a way to get his son the services he needed. "I called people; that's how I met Kathy Hill," he explains, referring to the director of the Preschool Day Treatment Program at the Glickman Lauder Center. "There was a waiting list, but Connor was able to get in for services." After he was diagnosed, the journey continued with telehealth visits and onsite visits on Mackworth Island and Lancaster Street in Portland.

When the new Glickman Lauder Center opened its doors in 2021, Connor was part of the first pre-K class. "Thanks to the IEP [individualized education program] they put in place for him, Connor graduated and started kindergarten at the Mabel Wilson School in Cumberland," says Ben. "Not only did the Glickman Lauder staff see that Connor made a smooth transition, but they prepared Natashia and me, as parents, to make sure we got every resource available for him."

Ben acknowledges that starting kindergarten in a new school was an adjustment for Connor, as was starting first grade. "I'm happy to say that second grade has been fantastic; Connor is in the class with everyone more than 80 percent of the time." He requires minimal extra support.

"At age seven, he's doing awesome," says Ben, "and it's because of the structure, the support and the resources he received when he attended school at the Glickman Lauder Center."

"We'll continue to give back"

Ben has found creative ways to express his gratitude for the Glickman Lauder Center and its expert, experienced providers. When the center's annual fundraiser, "An Evening of Possibility," was scheduled for September 2024, he approached several business colleagues to ask that they consider attending the event and making an extra gift.

Ben, who works at Jordan Equipment, approached his customers who purchase excavators and loaders. As a result, 20 seats at the event were filled by the Berrys and Ben's generous customers, resulting in a $10,000 gift. "Craig Wright, the owner of Coastal Lawn in Cumberland, wrapped up one of his machines with a banner to promote autism awareness," Ben notes.

That same month, Ben hosted "Equipment Day" at the Glickman Lauder Center: the arrival of equipment, from Bobcat tractors to Bobcat compact excavators, on which the children could play. They responded with smiles and excitement while getting into all the machines. The event was inspired by Connor's previous sensitivity to noise. "Diesel engines can be quite loud, but he conquered his fear," Ben says. "Now he loves to get in the machines and operate them. At Equipment Day, Connor showed the other kids where the buttons are." The two-hour event included pizza and soda for the Glickman Lauder staff.

At "An Evening of Possibility," Judy Glickman Lauder, the generous benefactor for whom the center is named, approached Ben to thank him for organizing his customers and the resulting support. "Natashia and I thanked her, and we told Judy that our son had been part of the first graduating class when the building was new. And we thanked her for putting her name on the building, because it gave us hope."

These days, Connor, now seven, is involved in team sports. He recently finished his first year playing hockey. "Connor is a beautiful little boy," says his loving father. "He's worked so hard to gain that independence. He wants to have fun and enjoy his life. He loves his family."

The Berrys have watched their son thrive, and they are optimistic about his future. "The center has played such an important role in Connor's life," says Ben. "We'll continue to give back—anything we can do to help the next person who needs services, as we did."

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This moment from last year's **"An Evening of Possibility"** captures the enjoyment and shared purpose felt by those who attended. Join us as we celebrate community and support outstanding care close to home on **Friday, September 26**.

For information on how to purchase tickets, please scan the QR code to the right.

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ABOUT US

The Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence provides coordinated specialty care for children and adults with developmental challenges. Our outpatient services include:

Multidisciplinary Outpatient Clinic

Day Treatment Program
(Kindergarten through 12th grade)

Preschool Day Treatment Program
(Age three to five)

Early Intervention
(Children under age three)

Please contact us at 207-661-3600

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