

Note: when you finish reading this newsletter, please pass it on to someone who doesn't know about AMBUCS.

July Amtrykes

Callan and his mom joined us for lunch on July 18th to receive his new Amtryke. He is a 7 year old young man whose nickname is Black Friday Door Buster because he was born at 4am on Black Friday. He started various therapy sessions when he was two and a half, physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and started trying to ride an Amtryke in school.



We gave him his first Amtryke which he had outgrown and brought back to us for repurposing. When Amtryke Ambassador, Scott Price finished adjusting the Amtryke and put Callan on it for his first ride around the lunch room, Callan pointed behind him at the door and said, "That way! That way!" He was more than ready to get outside and ride. When they did get out the door, Callan took off across the parking lot with Scott running to catch up! We know you'll have lots of great fun riding Callan! Come back and see us again!

Calendar

August 2-5—National Conf., Louisville, KY
 August 11—Clean Park Shed, 3pm
 September 18—GCC Charity Golf Fundraiser
 October 21—Scarecrow Festival
 October 28—disAbility Expo

2024

March 16—Cash Bash

April 5-6—Regional Conference, Champaign

Amtryke Build

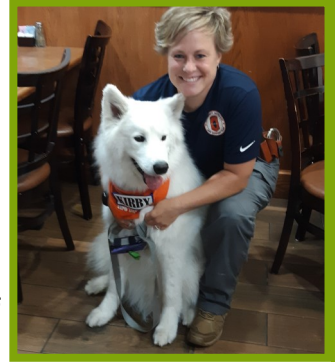
Ten AMBUCS converged on the Griest Man Shed to assemble 6 Amtrykes. As usual we unpacked the parts and pieces then took a break for some pizza to fuel our evening. We only managed to get five of the trikes built but that will still help our Amtryke Ambassador, Scott Price, get these trikes to their new owners faster. One Amtryke will need extra attention from Scott as the seat for it was backordered. (Deb Griest, far left in the picture, was pretending to sit on that trike.) We have been storing unneeded parts, and parts from returned trikes so we might have the needed seat in our storage shed. Thanks to Scott for braving the heat to organize and inventory the trikes in the shed to make room for these five new trikes! We'll be giving out more trikes as soon as possible. Thanks to all who came out to build!



Visit from Kirby, Therapy Dog Extraordinaire

Tara and Kirby, (call name Huff) U of I Police Force, came by on July 11th to tell us about the wonderful work therapy dogs do in our community. Tara is an outstanding soccer player and is even in the Hall of Fame but she wanted to serve in the police force and found her calling when Huff came into her life. She was four months pregnant and Huff was 4 months old. Since she was on

light duty until her child's birth, she was able to take Huff to the training he needed in Florida. Once trained, they started visiting schools, nursing homes, and hospitals, comforting people in need and just providing some fun for the workers. They also visited the Juvenile Detention Center and Tara says, "They have made some very bad choices in their lives but they are still children." Dogs improve the mental health of everyone! They visited with over 30,000 people in those first months! Now, Huff and dogs like him, go out on police calls with a therapist and help defuse situations that can become dangerous to the person and the police. The U of I Force has one therapist and one dog on each shift. One man was threatening to kill himself but put down his knife to hug the dog. Another therapy dog comforted a young girl, allowing her to tell the story of her abuse. They are also brought into courtrooms when children and other victims have to testify against the person who hurt them. Therapy dogs are now serving a great purpose in our community!



Loss of Jason Betzler



On Friday July 21 former member Jason Betzler passed from this life. He is survived by his wife, Andrea, also a GCC AMBUCS member, and his step children Matthew and Brianna Lilly. Jason served in the army reserves and had a degree in law enforcement. He worked at Premient, formerly Staleys, in Decatur. He and Andrea were high school sweethearts who drifted apart but found one another again and married in 2014. Jason came with Andrea to the 2015 AMBUCS National Conference (left) and was moved by the inspirational stories to join GCC. He loved computer gaming, traveling, and collecting cigars. He was a happy but slightly shy guy who always had a smile on his face. Jason was also a Gift of Hope donor.

He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Challenger League All Stars Game



Tuesday, July 25, AMBUCS members attended the All Star Game for the Tom Jones Challenger League at Eichelberger Field on the campus of the University of Illinois. Each year the League has its All Stars Game on campus with the Illinois football and baseball players volunteering as buddies. Here's what GCC AMBUCS member Renae' Strawbridge, had to say about the evening:

"There were two games of one inning each where teams got to bat and field one time. The kids were very excited about playing and some were quite animated in their excitement, entertaining the sup-

portive crowd who cheered for every attempt. U of I athletes in town for the Summer were some of the buddies and helpers, as well as local philanthropic supporters of TJCL. Smiles and happiness were apparent on every child's face, every athlete's face, and in every parent's heart! One added pleasure this year was my grandson, Jace, offered to be a helper and they put him to work as a bat boy. He even got a cameo clip on the WCIA news! It was a great night for all!" (Left photo by Renae' Strawbridge; right photo by Deb Griest)



Grants and Donations

Our supporters have been very generous this month! Thanks all!

==> We received a sizeable donation from a person in our community as a thank you to member **Deb Griest** for some work Deb did for her.

==> **Vista Helmets**, Rantoul, donated a bunch of helmets for us to give to our riders!

==> We got a nice grant from the U of I student group, **Orange Krush!**

==> We received a donation for a ramp we built three years ago.

==> **Ryan Dallas Real Estate**, where member **Will Wade** works, had a bowling fundraiser where bowlers were paid for each strike and spare. They picked three charities for their donations and GCC was one of them. (Will Wade, right with President Keith Jamieson presenting the check from Ryan Dallas.)



AMBUCS Golf Outing September 18

One of our three major fundraisers, the charity Golf Outing at **Lake of the Woods Golf Course**, Mahomet, is into the planning stage and event leader, Don Dunlap, reminds all members that we need sponsors, especially hole sponsors. If you secured a hole sponsor last year, please contact those same people this year. Also, sign up teams to play this beautiful course!

Splinters from the Board

The Board of Directors held a special meeting on July 18th and then met again on July 27th at Denny's and addressed the following items:

==> voted to sponsor an Amtryke at the National Conference

==> voted to donate \$5,000 to the Champaign County Forest Preserve for their project at Homer Lake

(right: 23-24 Board of Directors; not pictured Jodi Harmon)



Tidbits

Deb and Ray Griest's son Justin and family are living in the Griest Man Shed for a couple of months while a basement is being added to their house. This is an amazing process where they have to secure the house, lift it, dig out the basement, and pour concrete, all done by one man!

Members **Rena'e Strawbridge** and **Will Wade** have agreed to co-chair the Social Committee. We'll be having a social soon!

New member Colin Lamkin lost his father in July. Please send healing thoughts to Colin and his family.

Members with health issues need all of our good thoughts and good luck so please keep sending them to all of our members!

Please be sure to send healing thoughts to **Andrea Betzler** and her family, also, in this difficult time.

Winning Chances

07/11/23—50/50: \$8 to Larry Windingland; Attendance: \$32 could have been won by Maddie Browning-Perry but she was not present.

07/18/23—50/50: \$10 to MaryLou Younger; Attendance: \$49 could have been won by Alan Edwards but he was not present.

07/25/23—50/50: \$6 to Ray Griest; Attendance: \$61 could have been won by Dick Adams but he was not present.