



Dear Friends

I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. As we near the close of 2020, I wanted to give thanks to all of you for your generous contributions to *Here With Us* along with your love to myself & Jackson. If you were aware of who we are through conversation before, or you learned only after the tragedy of Ron's death we are happy you are here. The outpouring of support in Ron's honor has humbled me greatly and I feel a need to continue and share our future projects and progress. With that in mind I would like to share the very first *Here With Us* Newsletter.

Unfortunately, most plans we had for Here With Us this year were cancelled. As we look to reconstruct those ideas with the current landscape of our new world, we are super focused on the fact that individuals with Autism should not be forgotten in this pandemic.

Imagine the challenges we have all faced over the course of this year. Then imagine how it must be for them. In a world where the need for structure and routine prevails, the Autism population found themselves not understanding the changes. A simple trip to a store suddenly involved waiting, and mask wearing. A weekly schedule became non-existent with no promise of return. In their homes with no place to go. The ability to understand the "why" was difficult to convey and understand. Witnessing the disappointment required strength & compassion while watching them navigate those emotions. Trust me, these are not easy tasks. I now more than ever feel the urgency to create safe spaces. Additionally, I believe that with commitment and diligence we can still create age appropriate opportunities. Whether that be social or employment for young adults in this community, even in the age of COVID.

With all of that in mind, I've decided on a Food Drive. Something that can be done safely and serve at the same time. How wonderful would it be to see Jackson & his peers deliver food to a food bank donated by the very foundation we created on behalf of him and his cousin Gian?! I can't wait to share the success of this endeavor.

I'm happy to have the opportunity to keep in touch with you all, keeping you informed on the achievements we accomplish along the way. This is the vision that Ron so believed in. A world and a life where his son Jackson would be respected and applauded for his accomplishments.

Visit our website often. <https://herewithus.org> Stay safe and Happy Holidays.

With Love, Janine Louie