

# *Coping with Disabilities Through Pony*



A Non-Profit Initiative to Forward Awareness, Acceptance,  
Understanding, Empowerment, and Inclusion of Individuals  
with Special Needs through the Arts

Learn More at Our Official Site

<http://copingwithpony.weebly.com/>

Or Visit Our Support Site on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/hapotales>

## *Coping with Disabilities through Pony*

### Vision:

Forward Awareness, Acceptance, Understanding, Empowerment, and Inclusion of Individuals with Special Needs through the Arts

### Mission:

Actively pursue our vision either directly or indirectly within various social groups and professions to address the following:

1. Everyone is equal at some level
2. As equals we can work towards mutually beneficial goals
3. Define people by their talents, interests, and accomplishments instead of by their special needs



## HISTORY:

*Coping with Disabilities Through the Arts (CWDTA)* is a non-profit cause founded in December 2013 by Matthew S. Palumbo. Born with a congenital, degenerative, eye disease, Matthew turned to his love for writing as an outlet for expressing himself and his ideas. This eventually lead him to discover other people who, like him, have used the arts to cope with their special needs while finding acceptance, understanding, empowerment, and validation through the feedback of others who share their work. Noticing how so many people with special needs were being seen for their talents instead of their particular special need, CWDTA was born.

Since its inception, Matthew and his growing team have reached out to various social networking sites and organizations. Their goal being to spread the message of how participating in the arts allows individuals with special needs to acquire self-acceptance, understanding, empowerment, and validation. All of which are often recognized before their special need(s).

These efforts lead us to become recognized by the largest, international convention focused around the ideals of love and tolerance, BronyCon.

BronyCon is an annual convention in which takes place in Baltimore, MD within the Baltimore Convention Center. Our invitation to present in 2014 was well received and we have been invited back to present again in August of 2015.

Between our presentation at BronyCon 2014 and our upcoming event in 2015, our team has diligently worked to see our advocacy movement shared across a broad spectrum of social events and multimedia outlets. As we have grown, we have also made strategic partnerships with companies, such as *Enterplay LLC*, to benefit a local school for autism in Carlisle, PA.

## OUR TEAM:

### **MATTHEW PALUMBO**

Matthew Palumbo began writing “The Welcome to Saurral Manor” series of children’s books in 1999. Over the years, he has had the pleasure of working alongside other artists, Nicholas Bonanno, Rachel Merryfield, Latisha Banks, and Ari Kunofsky, to build upon his writing to where it is now self-published and available at

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?keyWords=Matthew+Palumbo&type.>

As a husband, father, and career oriented individual who holds a Masters degree in Business Administration, Matthew strives to put the whole of his experiences into each story he writes with the hopes that those reading them will feel as inspired as he was to write them.

Matthew is also the founder and lead coordinator for “Coping with Disabilities through Pony”. An effort in which Team Hapo members, Rachel Merryfield, Nicholas Bonanno, and Shawn Struck, have put a great deal of effort into. The goal of which is to educate and empower individuals with special needs on how, through the arts, a level playing field can be found where everyone has a place in the world that goes beyond stigmas and stereotypes.

### **Matthew’s 2014 Panel Presentation - (1:45 thru 16:10)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rtp8VVIVOGY&list=UJRektGzzzYWBRw6WV7tkwww>

**RACHEL MERRYFIELD:**

Rachel is a Software Developer and Artist who advocates for accessible technology. Her project to make Pokémon Red and Blue accessible to individuals with visual disabilities, Braillemon, is but one such effort towards making technology in which can be enjoyed by the widest and most diverse audience.

Rachel joined Team Hapo during our efforts to put on a panel at BronyCon 2014 in which was aimed at educating parents, children, and young adults that those with special needs are more than their special need. (In this case My Little Pony fans, Pokémon fans, etc.)

**Want to learn more about Braillemon?**

<http://braillemon.tumblr.com/>

**Rachel's 2014 Panel Presentation - (28:30 thru 36:05)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rtp8VVIVOGY&list=UURektGzzzYWBRw6WV7tkwww>

**LINDSEY PALUMBO**

Lindsey is a Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. She has ten years of experience working with individuals with vision loss adapt using Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training along with providing skills related to independent living.

Since 2001, Lindsey has participated in various disability rights advocacy efforts and groups throughout the United States. She also spent three years as a volunteer at a therapeutic riding academy while pursuing her Bachelors Degree in Rehabilitative Sciences with a Concentration in Developmentally Disabled while Minorng in Social Work and Psychology.

## **Shawn Struck**

Shawn is the multimedia editor and public relations coordinator for the panel. He's responsible for creating this panel website, coordination publicity and fan outreach, editing video clips used in the panel, editing the free e-book of collected inspirational stories submitted via [Facebook](#), [email](#) and [the story submission link](#), and recording and narrating the audio-book version. Shawn Struck has over a decade of experience working in design, copy writing, copy editing, and public relations. He's designed stuff for everyone from pro wrestlers to local governments, and his writing has appeared on the front page of Yahoo.com, on the 1UP Network, and in the pages of PC Gamer magazine. He lives in a secret underground lair in South Plainfield, NJ. His [website and portfolio are available here](#).

## **ARI KUNOFSKY:**

Ari is the creator of the "Fallen Angel" series of stories in which "Welcome to Saurral Manor" author, Matthew Palumbo, has been helping to bring to life through his writing abilities.

Matthew and Ari are a wonderful team in how they are utilizing their respective talents to collaborate on two very important projects. For Ari, Matthew is writing out the "Fallen Angel" series of stories while Ari is illustrating "Twinkle Morningdew".

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If you'd like to learn more about her, or her characters, please visit <http://ari-angelcub.tumblr.com/>

## **NICHOLAS BONANNO**

Nicholas Bonanno inspired the design for The Haposaur we know-and-love in the “Welcome to Saurral Manor” series. He was the illustrator of both “Captain Scuttles” and “Stream Stress” and now serves in the support position of self-publishing our stories while providing insightful advice on how to continually improve the overall quality of Team Hapo’s efforts.

When not illustrating children’s books, Nick spends his time writing, programming, and illustrating young adult themed satirical comics. Some of his work can be viewed by visiting <http://www.nishiox.com/>.

## **ASIA MARTINEZ:**

Asia Martinez is a freelance artist who frequents conventions and recently released a new comic book, Night Clinic. She does everything from ACEO trading cards, to graphic design. Her end goal is an animation/illustration career.

Mystic Pineapple is a company she founded for her works that mainly pertain to conventions. Her portfolio displays an array of skills, but mainly serves as a hub for her clients to contact her.

<http://asiamartinez.com/>

<http://nightclinic.tumblr.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mysticpineapple>

Asia is the developer of the 2015 "Coping with Disabilities Through Pony" logo, which is hand drawn, signed, and a part of the BronyCon 2015 Charity Auction.

**LIL MOON:**

Lil Moon's shop, Ai-Kawaii, specializes in the things she loves. These being: cute plushies that are inspired by Japanese culture and anime.

The name of her shop literally means "Love Cute". She started sewing by herself in 2007 and realized she had a talent for it. All of the items in her shop are hand-sewn by Lil Moon.

Lil Moon chooses only the finest materials to guarantee her customers the softest, squishiest plushies you can imagine!

Lil Moon attends many conventions throughout California, such as "Anime Expo", as well as "BronyCon". She has kindly made plushies for "Coping with Disabilities Through Pony" including 'Snowdrop' and 'Scootaloo'. That respectfully grace our table during our presentations as we advocate for individuals with special needs.

Want to know more about Lil Moon? You can visit her at the following web-sites to check out her work and potentially commission her for a special work of your own!

**DEVIANT ART:** <http://lilmoon.deviantart.com/>

**ETSY:** <https://www.etsy.com/shop/AiKawaiiShop>

**TUMBLR:** <http://aikawaiiishop.tumblr.com/>

## **Stoneth**

Stoneth has been writing and drawing ever since she could hold a pencil and is almost entirely self-taught, drawing influence from animated films, video games, and Japanese cartoons. A fan of My Little Pony from back in the 80s, she praises the modern day counterpart telling for its quality, characterization, humor, cuteness and ability to touch lives, something which she hopes to embody in her own artwork.

As an adult with Asperger syndrome, she feels it is important not just to support and spread awareness of people with autism and other special needs, but also to dispel the myths and misconceptions about it that are unfortunately spread in the modern age.

Stoneth is available for commissions with rates depending on the project. She can be reached at [stonethmon@gmail.com](mailto:stonethmon@gmail.com)

## DELDIUS CENTURION

Having a chance to work for CWDTP is like having a chance to sing with the Ponytones. You only have so much time to make your voice known before the curtains shut. When CWDTP sings...they sing about how labels can unfairly twist another's persona and how damaging it can be. We've all been labeled at some point and that is why we should change the tune! It would mean the world to me to hear CWDTP's song on both sides of the globe, but we need to fill the whole stage before that can happen...

I want to share something I haven't shared with anybody who knows about my OC. Some people might think this, but I haven't really told them. See...Deldius has a very good grip on himself and he has a lot of control over the things around him. He has his life figured out...That is somebody I want to be. Not the fighter...The person!

## **DR. WOLF:**

Dr. Wolf is a fictional psychologist who helps clients positively cope with their feelings through virtual therapy sessions.

What gave Dr. Wolf his start was the Brony fandom. Bronies are a diverse group of people of various ages and backgrounds who find inspiration, understanding, and acceptance through the show, My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic.

Dr. Wolf's virtual sessions largely focus on how his clients relate with My Little Pony. However, it is his active listening skills wherein he offers non judgmental and unbiased feedback that truly shine. Through using the cartoon as a catalyst for discussion, Dr. Wolf gets to the real heart of a client's emotions so they can positively move on rejuvenated and ready to take on the world around them in a positive light.

You can learn more about Dr. Wolf by visiting his channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DRWolf001>. There is also an accessible playlist

of his audio driven videos at

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4fITJfGvAgeDRjZU7TzALH-i0\\_GIFVMH](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4fITJfGvAgeDRjZU7TzALH-i0_GIFVMH).

**EVAN WALLACE:**

Evan Wallace is an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student within the Carlisle, PA Area Senior High School along with the NHS Autism School. He's an active member of "Fanbuilt", a free to join collaborative arts studio founded by Lee Tockar.

Evan has been an active part of Coping with Disabilities Through Pony, CWDTP, for the past 2 years. He assists with Public Relations alongside PR Lead, Shawn Struck. His role recently expanded to that of an ambassador for the movement.

While working with the CWDTP team, Evan has honed his networking talent and learned to direct it precisely. He has also learned new perspectives on acceptance. This has lead him wanting to spread the movement above and beyond BronyCon.

When not doing work for CWDTP, Evan is engaged in the production of his upcoming animated, web series, "Unicorn High". He also takes on a variety of public relations and promotional assignments associated with the arts. Evan also enjoys writing poetry, networking, and volunteering to work at an after-school arts program.