

## Lauren with a Side of Lewy

by Lauren U,  
PAC Core Team Member

I like kids. Babies, toddlers, school aged, teens, and young adults, I like them all. I think assisted living communities, day programs, memory care settings, and adult socialization efforts should include, or at least consider, visits, interactions, and friendships between adult participants and young people. I am lucky to have some of these opportunities. The relationships that have grown out of these bring me joy. Children are more accepting of differences. Even adolescents, who are generally considered quite opinionated, are open to relationships with people who treat them well.

For a few years I've participated in a bi-weekly program that includes children, teens, and young adults. Being around these young people makes me happy. I want to know about them and they want to know about me. Most of them are students, from grammar school through college, some enrolled in post graduate study. As with any group of folks, relationships are formed more strongly with some than others.



Lauren and J.C.

I've watched J.C. grow from a young boy into a confident teen. I don't see him as often now, but each time we are genuinely happy to catch up. I am a friendly adult who is interested in his life and always on his "side." I have seen Sabreen grow from an exuberant girl to an accomplished and beautiful young woman. I formed a strong bond and friendship with Lana, a post grad student. There are others who come and go, sometimes only once, others more regularly. They

teach me about things I would otherwise have little or no exposure to. They help me with apps, music, pop culture, and more. I'm more easily engaged in conversation with youngsters than with people closer to my age.

There are two very special volunteers. Bella is almost eleven and her sister Ellie just turned eight. Ellie is shy while Bella is sassy. I've enjoyed watching them grow and learn. They talk to me about their lives, friends, school, birthday parties, Girl Scouts, hopes, and dreams. Neither care about my diagnosis, they simply like hanging out with me as I like hanging out with them. I love buying and giving them small gifts. These simple gestures of friendship warm my heart. Sometimes they refer to me as "Grandma." How wonderful! I always look forward to our time together.

I want to talk about Seb, a PAC child, Abby's son. I feel a strong kinship with this lovely young man. His creativity and originality far surpass most other boys his age. Seb likes to do things in a fashion different from others. This is only one reason I feel connected to him. I know he will continue to mature into a fine, wonderful, and unique adult. I'm blessed to have him in my life.

Babies. I love babies. The newest baby is Liliana. She is the daughter of Alejandro, a PAC mentor, and his wife, Andrea. Liliana is brand new to this world and I'm excited to watch this little one grow up. I feel especially honored that she was given the name that I suggested. Seeing this precious baby reminds me of all the possibilities in this world. She gives me hope.

My very special baby is Benji, son of Dan and Amanda. All babies are wonderful but this toddler has stolen my heart. Benji is a joyful, happy, and active little boy who is full of smiles, giggles, and snuggles. He knows nothing about diagnoses, nor does he care to. He simply wants to be with people who want to be with him. Benji investigates what he more fully wants to understand and that makes sense to me. His curiosity is infectious and makes all exploration acceptable. I love this little boy.



*Lauren and Baby Benji  
(He's 2 now!)*

Being with children of all ages brings me joy and pleasure. They touch my soul in ways I only find with youngsters and animals. There are no adult expectations. I can be whoever and however I am in the moment and it's fully acceptable. I can breathe more easily. I feel at peace with the children, the world, and myself.

*Lauren U is a member of the [Positive Approach](#)<sup>®</sup> to Care (PAC) Core Team. She was a registered nurse with the ANCC Board Certification in Psychiatry for 30 years. Now she is the keeper of the frolic. Lauren has been living with Lewy Body Dementia (love how they add "with behavioral disturbance") for over five years. She currently lives in Northern California with her professor husband, Eddy. She enjoys spending time with her friends (the horses) at her [TROTR](#) equine therapy program. PAC agrees with Lauren – that she is delightful!*