

AUTISM OUTLOOK

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM

THE KELBERMAN CENTER
AUTISM SERVICES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN
AN AFFILIATE OF UPSTATE CEREBRAL PALSY

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

JUNE 2006

Faces of Autism Telethon Raises Money and Awareness

The Second Annual Faces of Autism Telethon for the Kelberman Center at Upstate Cerebral Palsy was held on April 11, 2006 and once again was a resounding success. Raising over \$150,000, the community's support of the Faces of Autism Telethon truly demonstrates our region's generosity and commitment to individuals with disabilities.



WKTV reporter Joleen Ferris with Upstate Cerebral Palsy Promise Program student, at the Second Annual Faces of Autism Telethon.

Helen Stepowany, Executive Director of the Kelberman Center, remarked on the outpouring of support from both corporate partners and individual donors. "Our ability to deliver life-changing programs to individuals with autism is directly related to the partnerships we form in our communities. The generosity of so many is indeed gratifying and absolutely makes a difference in the lives of individuals with autism and their families. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously."

The Faces of Autism Telethon was made possible through the partnership of WKTV and Northland Communications.

Other corporate partners included Adirondack Bank, Adirondack Financial Services, Don-AI Management Company, First Source Federal Credit Union, George Nole and Son, Inc., Mac-Clark Restaurants and moe.

Kelberman community partnerships in action.....

VVS Coffee Club Offers Support to Families

Recognizing the importance of peer support and information sharing among families who have a child with autism, the Kelberman Center was ready, willing and able to provide resources for a six-week parent support program that recently concluded at the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill school district. Replicating a successful model of support that has been offered at the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Promise Program, the VVS "Coffee Club" gave families from the district the opportunity to network, learn new information and receive support from their peers and from Michelle Williams, Director of Clinical Services at the Kelberman Center. A clinical social worker with extensive autism background, Michelle worked with the district to set up the program and then facilitated each session.

VVS is the first area school district to offer this service for families in collaboration with the Kelberman Center. Brenda Harris, a parent who participated in the sessions, shared this thought of her experience, "Our meetings were very informative and supportive, no question was too simple to be answered."

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Mission Statement

The Kelberman Center at Upstate Cerebral Palsy is a regional center for excellence for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and related learning challenges. We are dedicated to excellence in service through: Prompt evaluation and diagnosis; individualized education and services; social and life skills enhancement; innovative practices, training and research. We believe in the power of individuals, family, and community working together to maximize our collective potential.

The Kelberman Center Autism Services Across the Lifespan

Annie P. Tilton Center
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www.kelbermancenter.org

Message From Helen Stepowany Executive Director, The Kelberman Center

The puzzle and challenge of autism has captured the increasing attention of individuals from all walks of life: medical professionals, state and federal legislators, educators, researchers, law enforcement, professional athletes and even the entertainment industry. From a little known and seldom diagnosed disorder twenty-five years ago, autism has taken center stage in its dramatic increase in incidence and its corresponding impact on the lives of 1 in 166 American children and their families.



While major research studies aimed at identifying the cause(s) of autism as well as the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies have been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and others, the results of those studies are still years away. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is currently the only research-based intervention that has been shown to be effective. However, we know that early intervention for children with autism is critical and that key elements of that intervention do lead to improved outcomes for children with an autism spectrum disorder. Those elements include: early diagnosis and comprehensive developmental assessment, establishment of a program plan that identifies and incorporates the child's strengths and need areas, and opportunities for learning and intervention in structured settings that are developmentally appropriate. Program plans that utilize well-trained staff with expertise in autism are essential and parents should be welcomed as core members of the planning team. Finally, transition planning (often complex since transitions are hard for a child with autism) must begin early and be ongoing with all members of the interdisciplinary team sharing development of the plan.

The mission of the Kelberman Center focuses upon the provision of these key elements that are the foundation of maximizing the potential of each and every child who experiences an autism spectrum disorder. Through expanding early identification and consultation services, comprehensive programs like the Upstate Cerebral Palsy First Step, Promise and Tradewinds programs and professional and community education programs including the Summer Institute on Autism and the Autism Speaker Series, the resources of the Kelberman Center provide a strong partnership to families and to the community in the provision of expert resources for the families of central New York now and in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen E. Stepowany".

2006 Summer Institute on Autism - Register Today!

With Keynote Address by Taylor Cross and Keri Bowers
followed by a screening of Taylor's film "Normal People Scare Me."

July 24-25, 2006 at the Radisson Hotel, Utica, NY

Join us as nationally-recognized experts in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) come together to provide professional development training for educators and service providers in the northeast.

INSTITUTE SPEAKERS

Monday, July 24, 2006

- Assessment and Evaluation of Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities
- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Principles and Best Practice in Intervention and Education
Daniel W. Mruzek, Ph.D., BCBA
- Fostering Mutual Friendships for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder-The Friend 2 Friend Model
- Fostering Mutual Relationships-The Friend 2 Friend Model
Heather McCracken
- Dinner and Keynote Address, Taylor Cross & Keri Bowers
- Viewing of the Film: **Normal People Scare Me**
- Question and Answers with Taylor Cross & Keri Bowers



Institute Fees: \$195 per person if received by July 11th (\$225 per person after July 11th)
Group Discount: \$175 per person for groups of 3+ from same organization

Please call (315) 798-8808 ext. 284 to register or for more information!

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

- Breakfast Panel: Real Life Questions, Real Life Answers
Panel to include: Heather McCracken, James Ball, Ron Oberleitner, Catherine Faherty, Marlene Breitenbach, Taylor Cross & Keri Bowers
- Building Capacity to Serve Students with Autism in Rural Schools: A Continuum of Supports-Prince Edward Island
Marlene Breitenbach, M.S. Ed, BCBA
- What Does It Mean? Helping Parents Explain Autism Spectrum Disorder To Their Children
Catherine Faherty
- Transition: Looking Many Ways At Once
Tracey Menapace
- Focus on Fathers
Dr. James Ball, BCBA & Ron Oberleitner
- Future Directions in Autism
Stephen R. Anderson, Ph.D.

Mobile Screening Program

A two-year commitment from the United Way of the Greater Utica Area will provide the necessary resources to launch a new Kelberman Center initiative in September 2006. The Community Based Early Identification Screening program includes a mobile screening and consultation team (special educator, speech pathologist) who will provide free screenings for children in typical settings (child care, community preschools, Headstart) who exhibit behavioral, communication and social skill difficulties. In addition, community based training workshops for community preschool and childcare providers will help those individuals who work with children from birth to school age better understand the behavioral management, communication and learning needs of children with autism and make adaptations to early childhood environments that can support children with autism who are served in typical settings.

The Kelberman Center mobile screening and consultation program offers area pre-school and daycare staff and area families access to a team of special education professionals with expertise in autism spectrum disorders, communication and social delays. Through on-site initial visits, no-cost assessments and (when indicated) referral for evaluations through qualified providers like Upstate Cerebral Palsy, this mobile team will offer a responsive and informed resource for screening and information as well as planning support to determine the next steps. Offering these services on-site in a familiar setting will also facilitate access to resources while easing the initial fears that arise when families question their child's development.

The Kelberman Center Donors

The Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the following donors who share our commitment to comprehensive services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. **Gifts received are from February 1, 2006 to June 12, 2006.**

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Kelberman Center Founders

Our founders are visionaries who are meeting the challenge of autism and have answered with resounding support. Their leadership and commitment ensures that everyone on the autism spectrum receives the life-enhancing supports that maximize their full potential.

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Key Contacts at The Kelberman Center

For more information regarding The Kelberman Center and Upstate Cerebral Palsy affiliated programs and services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, contact:

Education, Training and Consultation Services**Evaluation and Diagnostic Services**

Michelle Williams, Director of Clinical Services - (315) 797-6241

Early Childhood Services - First Steps & Promise Program

Nancy Seller, Division Director - (315) 798-4006 ext. 225

Autism Support Group

Leslie Stephens, Family Services Specialist - (315) 798-4006 ext. 372

School Age Services - Tradewinds Program

James Weaver, Division Director - (315) 533-1150 ext. 231

Family Support and Waiver Services**Recreation and Afterschool Programs**

Dana Guernsey, Director of Community Services - (315) 738-0794 ext. 223

Administration Office

Helen Stepowany, Executive Director - (315) 724-6907 ext. 2275

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Mobile Screening Program continued from page 3...

Trainings will be available to childcare providers to familiarize them with developmental milestones and the resources available for young children with developmental disabilities. The Kelberman Center will work with early childhood professionals to inform them of the no-cost screenings available to families.

“Partnering with the United Way of the Greater Utica Area in this much needed initiative is an investment in the future of our area’s children. It signals to the community that the United Way and Kelberman Center are committed to ensuring access to programs and proven therapeutic interventions for the young child on the autism spectrum,” stated Helen Stepowany, Executive Director of the Kelberman Center. Additional support has been received from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation. Funds from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation will be used to provide the necessary training to community partners working with children on the autism spectrum.

The identification of children with developmental disabilities at an early age will allow those children and their families to access services which improve their overall outcome for enhancing their full potential. For a child with autism who has significant delays in social processing and communications, the research confirms that intervention between birth and three years of age is the most beneficial. This program will educate childcare providers and give children and their families access to screenings, evaluations and services in a more timely manner.

Anita Moller, Director of Community Impact and Resource Development at the United Way of the Greater Utica Area, agrees that “one of the priorities is ensuring that kids are ready for school, and the Kelberman Center Community Based Early Screening Program clearly addresses this. In recommending funding for this program, our volunteers were particularly impressed with its proactive approach and we are excited to see how it develops.”

Autism Awareness Month Has Positive Community Impact



Al Schnier of the band moe., with his family (below) and an excited telethon supporter (left) at the 2nd Annual Faces of Autism Telethon.



Parent volunteers staff the Autism Awareness booth in Sangertown Square Mall in New Hartford, NY.



Parents and children enjoy games, lunch and socialization at the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Promise Program Family Picnic.



Fisher Road Elementary School students in Mohawk, NY, sold over 500 autism puzzle pieces to support services at the Kelberman Center.

Helen Stepowany with David Gaynes (director) & Peter Kohn (film feature character) at the "Keeper of the Kohn" Autism Speaker Series film screening.

Upstate Cerebral Palsy
The Kelberman Center
Annie P. Tilton Center
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