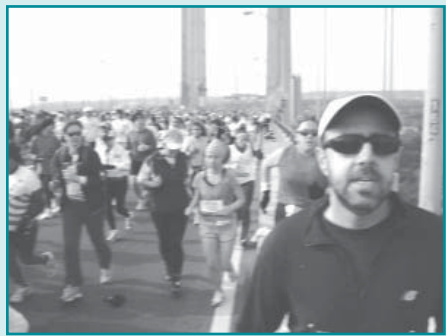


## The Kelberman Center In Brief.....



The Kelberman Center was dedicated on Thursday, September 7, 2006 in a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the continuity of care now available to individuals on the autism spectrum through services at the agency. The dedication recognized the generous contributions of the Kelberman Center founders, most notably Dr. and Mrs. Michael Kelberman, pictured left. Also pictured are Kelberman Center Executive Director, Helen E. Stepowany and Upstate Cerebral Palsy Executive Director, Louis B. Tehan.



Al Schnier of the band moe. recently completed his second New York City Marathon on Sunday, November 5, 2006. Al raised over \$12,000 through pledges on the Firstgiving website to benefit services at the Kelberman Center. Al cited the increasing incidences of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and emphasized the importance of Kelberman Center services to provide an outlet to diagnose and support these individuals. Pictured is Al Schnier as he runs the New York City marathon.

Upstate Cerebral Palsy  
The Kelberman Center  
Annie P. Tilton Center  
1601 Armory Drive, Building C  
Utica NY 13501

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# AUTISM OUTLOOK

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM **THE KELBERMAN CENTER**  
AUTISM SERVICES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN  
AN AFFILIATE OF UPSTATE CEREBRAL PALSY

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2006

## The Kelberman Center Welcomes New Leadership Staff

The Kelberman Center is pleased to announce the additions of two new staff members to leadership positions at the Center, Beth A. Myers, Director of the Kelberman Center and Robert E. Myers, III, Director of Consultation and Behavioral Services for the Kelberman Center.

A special education teacher by training, Beth is a candidate for Doctor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. For the past six years, Beth supervised a school district based program for children with autism in Ardmore, Pennsylvania and worked as an independent autism consultant. Beth will be conducting research in the area of social skills development as part of her doctoral dissertation.



Beth A. Myers

Robert has worked as a Clinical Supervisor at the Lovaas Institute, where he gained extensive experience in the area of staff training, development of behavior intervention plans and community education and has also worked internationally with children with autism spectrum disorder.



Robert E. Myers, III

Currently, Beth has been meeting with parents and families, conducting school observations, running Kelberman Center clinical and operational meetings as well as conducting grant research. Beth has created a social skills group for children as well as a support group for teens and adults. She has also extended the parent support and education networks for school districts and has started up the early screening team. "Our emphasis on researched-based best practice puts us at the forefront of autism services," says Beth, and continues, "as we begin to increase the research done at the Kelberman Center, we will be poised to contribute a great deal to the local knowledge base."

Robert has been developing a healthy working relationship with school districts and families as well as delivering direct behavior consultation services to districts, families, and service providers. Robert is planning to implement services in homes as well as schools, including developing community workshops designed to provide additional training to families and community members. Robert cites that the diversity of programs available at the Kelberman Center makes him enthused about working at the agency, noting that "the Kelberman Center team is striving to provide the Mohawk Valley with the highest quality of service available anywhere."

Looking toward the future, Beth expresses that she is honored to be a part of such a special project as it changes and grows and to be in an organization that is truly meeting a need within the community. The continuity of care provided by the Kelberman Center will create lasting change in the lives of those with autism spectrum disorder and will serve as a valuable resource for innovative practices within the region.

## Board of Directors

### President

Dr. Michael Kelberman

### Vice President

Michael Stewart

### Secretary/Treasurer

Louis B. Tehan

### Board Members

Dominick Carbone

Eileen LaBarbera

### Executive Director

Helen E. Stepowany

## Advisory Board

Michael Powers, Psy.D.

Sandra DeMyer-Gapin, Ph.D.

Stephen R. Anderson, Ph.D.

Veronica M. Zysk

Susan L. Hyman, MD

## 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  
1601 Armory Drive  
Building C  
Utica NY 13501

(315) 797-6241

[www.kelbermancenter.org](http://www.kelbermancenter.org)

## Outlook From Helen Stepowany Executive Director, The Kelberman Center

Autism is a disorder that is characterized by difficulty in communication and social interaction. As a result, the building of social skills and interpersonal relationships presents an extreme challenge for a growing child who has been diagnosed with autism and beyond childhood, for teens and young adults. Friendships, group activities with peers and even family vacations may be the exception rather than the rule in the life experiences of a person with autism.



The mission of the Kelberman Center has focused upon the development of a continuum of services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders and for their families, including the expansion of opportunities to develop and expand communication and social skills for children and adults with autism. Begun at the request of families and individuals themselves, social skills groups for elementary age students and "Advancement Square," a support group for teens and adults with autism, have expanded the continuum of Kelberman Center services for social skill supports and services here in central New York State.

In his interview this month in Autism Outlook, Dr. Michael Powers reminds us that the most effective services for persons with autism reflect a family's values as the driving force for service provision and that we must always treat the person first, not the person's disability. The time is right to remember that the development of skills that support friendships, community connections and family experiences are not "extras," but are the foundation that helps in building a meaningful life for each person with autism spectrum disorder. We look forward to building together...one person at a time.

## 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:

### Director

Beth A. Myers  
(315) 797-6241 ext. 412

### Director of Consultation and Behavioral Services

Robert E. Myers, III  
(315) 797-6241 ext. 411

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

Robert E. Myers, III  
(315) 797-6241 ext. 411

### Early Childhood Services First Steps & Promise Program

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



*Kelberman community partnerships in action.....*

## Advancement Square: A Group for Adults and Teens

On Tuesday, October 24, 2006 a new support group at the Kelberman Center held its first meeting. Those in attendance were adults and teens with Autism Spectrum disorders, such as Asperger's Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism. The first meeting concentrated on developing guidelines for the group, designing future activities and choosing a name. "It is really important for the members of this group to have ownership of it," said Beth Myers, who facilitates the group.

The group chose the name "Advancement Square" and decided on a three-part focus: supportive, educational, and social. Group members will have the opportunity to get together weekly and learn from one another. One member described the group as a "think tank," a time and place for sharing ideas and solving problems. Members discuss coping strategies and ways to adapt and offer support to one another. The group can also request informational sessions on specific topics, such as social skills, employment issues, and handling stress.

In addition to the learning and support offered, members wanted a group where they could be with others who are similar or have similar interests. Future activities include a game night and a movie night. The group will also drive together to Albany to hear a lecture by Dr. Temple Grandin, called "My Experiences with Autism." Dr. Grandin's presentation will include a book signing of her newest releases, "Succeeding in School and Careers" and "The Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships."

Advancement Square is open to teens and adults over 15 years of age. The group meets on Tuesdays from 5:00pm to 6:30pm in the Kelberman Center, 1601 Armory Drive, Utica. For more information or to sign up, call Beth Myers, 797-6241 ext. 412.

## 2006 Autism Speaker Series



Dr. Christopher Lopata

Dr. Marcus Thomeer and Dr. Christopher Lopata recently presented their work as a part of the Kelberman Center's 2006 Autism Speaker Series, sponsored by First Source Federal Credit Union. Dr. Thomeer is Director of Research and Program Evaluation at Summit Educational Resources Inc. and a member of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Research Consortium (ASDRC). Dr. Lopata is Assistant Professor in the Graduate Department of Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology at the University of Buffalo and one of the founders of the ASDRC.

Both charismatic speakers, Dr. Thomeer and Dr. Lopata captivated the audience of almost 125 attendees. While introducing Asperger's Syndrome and its diagnostic criteria, Dr. Lopata related personal stories of his experiences with children with Autism. He provided an overview of the features associated with Asperger's Syndrome its characteristics.

Dr. Thomeer presented current research on Asperger's Syndrome, particularly in the areas of emotional-behavioral regulation, speech and communication, and social skills. Through the University of Buffalo and Summit Educational Resources, Dr. Thomeer and Dr. Lopata run a six-week summer camp which focuses on social skill development. Camp activities include social skills groups, cooperative tasks, games, and sports. There is a continuous focus on generalizing the skills learned in group to the real-life situations that the campers will experience with their peers. For more information on the Connections summer camp and the work of Dr. Thomeer and Dr. Lopata, visit their website at [www.asdrc.org](http://www.asdrc.org).

## Kelberman Center Guest Interview: Dr. Michael Powers

The Autism Outlook guest interview provides a question and answer format for professionals to share information and valuable insights with the community.



Dr. Michael Powers

### About Dr. Powers

Dr. Powers is a pediatric psychologist and the Director of The Center for Children with Special Needs in Glastonbury, Connecticut. He specializes in the diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of individuals with autism and related developmental disabilities. Dr. Powers has been on the Kelberman Center advisory board since the Center's incorporation as a 501(c)(3) in 2005.

### How did you become involved in working with individuals with autism?

As an undergraduate at Rutgers University, I became interested in autism through an initial one time field work requirement working with children with autism. I developed an interest in autism because of this field work and decided to further my interest through additional field work, providing the basis for my career specializing in autism. My interest and career in autism started as "a happy accident," but has evolved into the most exciting career I could ever imagine.

### Describe your personal orientation towards autism services.

I believe that a family centered, evidenced based practice is the most effective method of providing autism services, emphasizing the importance of family values as the driving force of service provision. When working with individuals on the autism spectrum, I also feel that practitioners and family members alike should appreciate the strengths and gifts of these individuals, recognizing, respecting and valuing their many gifts and talents and viewing *them* as teachers, sharing and appreciating their unique experiences as educational tools.

### What makes an effective conference?

For me, the most effective conference is one in which findings are presented in a practical context. Equally as important is a presenter who extrapolates on practices that did not work in a certain situation and explains how he or she learned from the situation, therefore assisting families and service providers who may be facing similar issues.

### What advice do you have for parents of children on the autism spectrum?

I recommend that when dealing with a child with autism that first and foremost a parent must understand the child as a child, and not let his or her diagnosis and the resulting hurdles overshadow that fact. Second, I believe that parents often help their child and family best when family members collaborate together to address the needs of a child. Combining family participation with exceptional professional services and supports provides the strongest foundation for effective treatment and care of their child.

## 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.*

Michael and Jennifer Kelberman and Family

Don and Edie Carbone and Family

Al and Joan Carbone and Family

H. Thomas Clark

The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc.

Albert and Elinor Mazloom

Michael and Carleen Stewart

George Aney, Esq.

Eugene and Connie Corasanti

Jim and Sandy D'Onfrio

Joseph and Eileen LaBarbera

Angelo and Angela Nole

Michael and Kelly Parsons

Jay and Barbara Peak

Charlie and Gretchen Sprock

Louis and Laura Tehan

Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc.

**Please contact Colleen Cianfrocco, at (315) 724-6907 ext. 2279 to learn how you can help.**

## Autism Facts and Information Did You Know?

*New research suggests that the different parts of the brain in an individual with autism have difficulty working together to perform complicated tasks.*  
(Child Neuropsychology)

*An individual is diagnosed with autism every 20 minutes.*  
(Autism Society of America)

*During the 1990s, the United States population increased 13% but the number of individuals diagnosed with autism increased 172%.*  
(Autism Society of America)

*Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability and affects 1 to 1.5 million Americans.*  
(Autism Society of America)

## Congress Passes Combat Autism Act

The Kelberman Center joined in celebrating with families across the region, on December 7, 2006 as the Combating Autism Act (CAA) was passed by both houses of the U.S. Congress. The act is considered by many to be the most comprehensive single-disease legislation in the history of the country. "I think this is legislation that is long overdue," said Dr. Michael Kelberman, President of The Kelberman Center. "This funding will hopefully help researchers get to the core of what is causing the near epidemic incidence of the disorder affecting children today."

The measure authorizes nearly one billion dollars over the next five years to combat autism through research, screening, early detection and early intervention. The CAA also has provisions relating to the diagnosis and treatment of persons with autism spectrum disorders and expands and intensifies biomedical research in autism, including a focus on possible environmental causes.

## MarCom Award

The 2006 MarCom Creative Awards recently honored the Autism Asperger's Digest with a "Gold" award. This is an international competition for marketing and communication professionals involved in the concept, writing and design of marketing and communication programs and print, visual and audio materials. Veronica Zysk, Kelberman Center Advisory Board member, is the editor of Autism Asperger's Digest.

I want to help The Kelberman Center provide the best possible care for anyone who needs its help!

Enclosed is my donation of  \$25.00  \$50.00  \$100.00  Other

Method of Payment (Circle One):  Visa  Mastercard  Check

Please make checks payable to Cerebral Palsy Association

Credit Card Acct # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information about naming The Kelberman Center in my will.



Donations can be mailed to:  
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1601 Armory Drive  
Utica, NY 13501