



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
- **Clinical Psychologist/ Pediatric Neuropsychologist**
Dr. Danielle M. Bronk
(315) 797-6241
- **Administration Office**
Helen Stepowany, Executive Director
(315) 724-6907 ext. 2275
- **Education, Training and Consultation Services Evaluation and Diagnostic Services**
Robert E. Myers, III
(315) 797-6241 ext. 411
- **Early Childhood Services**
Nancy Seller, Division Director
(315) 798-4006 ext. 225
- **School Age Services Tradewinds Program**
James Weaver, Division Director
(315) 533-1150 ext. 231
- **Parent Support Group**
Leslie Stephens, Family Services Specialist
(315) 798-4006 ext. 372
- **Family Support & Waiver Services Recreation and Afterschool Programs**
Dana Guernsey, Director of Community Services
(315) 738-0794 ext. 223
- **Social Skills Groups**
Beth Myers, Director
(315) 797-6241 ext. 284
- **Promise Program**
Dr. Jean Jacobson, Director
(315) 798-4006 ext. 233
- **Medicaid Management**
Deanna Puleo, Sr. Medicaid Service Coordinator
(315) 797-6241 ext. 405

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 2 ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2007

Kelberman Center Welcomes Pediatric Neuropsychologist



Pictured: Danielle M. Bronk, Ph.D. as the Kelberman Center Clinical Psychologist/ Pediatric Neuropsychologist.

The Kelberman Center is proud to introduce the newest addition to its team of professionals in the field of autism spectrum disorder, Danielle M. Bronk, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist/Pediatric Neuropsychologist. Dr. Bronk offers a wide variety of evaluation services for individuals across the lifespan, including psychological and neuropsychological evaluations.

Noting the growth and opportunity for innovation and service provision in the region, Dr. Bronk returned to the Utica area after growing up here. She was very impressed with the treatment services offered at the Kelberman Center and felt that her experience as a clinical psychologist and training in neuropsychology would integrate well with the already

superb level of care provided at the Center. "I am proud to see this area flourish and wanted to be a part of the great things happening here," says Bronk. Dr. Bronk reflects that she had always wanted to work with children in a helping field, which led her to pursue her Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Seton Hall University in New Jersey.

Dr. Bronk completed her predoctoral internship in clinical psychology/ neuropsychology at NYU Medical Center's Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine in New York, NY. After completing her doctorate, Dr. Bronk conducted her postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Healthcare System, where she performed comprehensive outpatient neuropsychological evaluations of preschool age children through young adulthood addressing various referral questions, including behavioral and learning disorders, autism spectrum disorders, seizure disorders, among others.

Dr. Bronk is a member of the Kelberman Center multidisciplinary staff, which includes psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioner, social workers, occupational and physical therapists, speech and language pathologists, as well as educational/behavioral

specialists. She will work with this team to provide psychological and neuro-psychological evaluations to individuals across the lifespan who are suspected of having developmental delays, emotional/ behavioral disorders or learning disabilities. The types of evaluations are based on referral questions and the needs of the individual.

These comprehensive evaluation services, according to Dr. Bronk, "coupled with the Center's commitment to providing excellence in treatment, educational and supportive services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities, positions the Kelberman Center as a stellar evaluation and service provider in upstate New York."

1 in 150 Children Has Autism

Early Evaluation and Diagnosis is Essential...

Danielle M. Bronk, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist/
Pediatric Neuropsychologist

For an appointment, contact
The Kelberman Center at
(315)797-6241 or visit
www.kelbermancenter.org

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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
1601 Armory Drive
Building C
Utica NY 13501

(315) 797-6241

www.kelbermancenter.org

Outlook From Helen Stepowany Executive Director, The Kelberman Center

With the ever changing global environment focused now more than ever on autism and the widespread impact on individuals, school districts, parents and families, the Kelberman Center is proud to offer comprehensive services to individuals across the lifespan, including many of the now **1 in 150 children**, according to the Centers for Disease Control, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder right here in the Mohawk Valley.



This issue of the Autism Outlook newsletter addresses many prominent issues currently in the field, including the most recent study conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on the importance of universal autism spectrum disorder screenings for all children at 18 and 24 months, regardless of whether there are any concerns with the child's development. The Kelberman Center aligns itself with the American Academy of Pediatrics on its decision to support early autism screenings, having screened over 175 preschoolers during the 2006-07 school year. The recent addition of Dr. Danielle Bronk, Clinical Psychologist/Pediatric Neuropsychologist, will allow the Kelberman Center to provide further, comprehensive evaluations to individuals of all ages, an essential component in determining next steps for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Education and practical life experiences are tangential components to the evaluation, treatment and comprehensive array of services offered at the Kelberman Center. The annual Autism Institute is a pertinent training experience for practitioners in the field, as well as for parents and individuals with autism - an event that brings together nationally recognized experts in the field of autism spectrum disorders, with over 200 attendees this year. Experiences for children, such as participating in the Awesome Summer Days social skills camp, enabled them to learn and reinforce social skills over the summer months, while also facilitating practice of these skills throughout their entire camp experience.

This is an exciting time for the Kelberman Center, embracing growth and changes within the field, positioning itself as a trusted resource within the autism community. Through new evaluation services, educational opportunities and programs for both adults and children, the Kelberman Center continues to meet the unique needs of individuals in an environment celebrating individuality and innovation.

An Awesome Summer to Remember!

Twenty four children had an extra special experience this summer, complete with fishing, diamond mining and visits to the zoo. Most importantly, all of these activities involved social skills training - training to help the campers, all with autism spectrum disorders, Aspergers Syndrome, or related challenges, to relate and participate more actively and appropriately with their peers and with society as a whole.



Throughout the five weeks of camp, campers aged 6 to 14 participated in a wide variety of activities, including art, yoga, sports, photography, team building, music, nature, fishing and horseback riding. Campers also experienced field trips in conjunction with the Upstate Cerebral Palsy PULSE Program, a subdivision of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, to places like the Herkimer Diamond Mines, Roger's Environmental Center, Fort Rickey Discovery Zoo and the Syracuse MOST Museum. This collaboration provided an inclusion component to the camp, presenting the campers with an opportunity to practice social skills in a real-life setting.

Throughout the camp, participants practiced skills such as self awareness, understanding others, emotional development, conversation making and maintaining friendships, self-advocacy, responsibility and conflict resolution. Campers were split into four groups by age and skill level to maximize instructional

opportunities. Staff included two directors, twelve counselors, two research interns, a full-time nurse and seven part-time specialists.

Pictured: Campers and staff learning and having fun on field trips, including Fort Rickey Discovery Zoo, Roger's Environmental Center and fishing.

Parents were elated with their children's camp experience, citing a tremendous improvement in their children's ability to socialize and communicate in an effective manner. According to one parent, "The camp was wonderful... beyond our expectations. Thank you for a much needed and targeted program...my daughter came away with a new confidence in herself!" Awesome Summer Days camp was funded in part by a legislative grant from New York State Senator Joseph A. Griffo, who is pictured to the right accepting a thank you from agency staff, board members and campers.



Pictured right to left: Senator Joseph A. Griffo, Upstate Cerebral Palsy Board President Blake Ford, Kelberman Center Executive Director Helen Stepowany and an Awesome Summer Days camper.

Thank you for Your Support! New Kelberman Center Founders

The Kelberman Center gratefully acknowledges the following friends who have recently joined our Founders Group. The ongoing support of our community has helped to establish the Kelberman Center as the premier autism services organization in central New York. For information on how you can join the Kelberman Center Founders, contact Colleen Cianfrocco at 724-6907, ext. 2279.

Mr. David Banas

Dr. and Mrs. James Cimo

Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Ho

Dr. and Mrs. Raouf Kodsy

Dr. Assia Shatla

2007 Autism Institute

From Obstacles to Opportunities
Understanding Behavior and Strategies to Success

THE KELBERMAN CENTER
AUTISM SERVICES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN
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INSTITUTE SPEAKERS IN REVIEW...



Jed Baker, Ph.D.

"My work all begins with the long term goals of my clients, students, parents and the schools. I take a cognitive-behavioral approach to teaching skills to help clients reach their goals. I am open to all strategies as long as there is some direct evidence for their effectiveness or indirect evidence in that they are based on techniques that have been effective with other populations. As far as advice to parents, they must educate themselves about what services will help their children and advocate to get those services early on. Parents should seek the advice of The Autism Society of America and University Centers that provide research on the results of autism treatments."

"My particular area of interest is in positive behavior support (PBS), an approach to first understanding the reasons behind problem behavior and then developing person-centered respectful supports that change problem situations for the person, and teaches the person new ways of communicating and coping with difficulties. PBS is highly respectful because it doesn't force the individuals to change through the manipulation of consequences, but invites them to learn by adapting the environment to their needs. What I learned from the conference is that four presenters, each with very different backgrounds and experiences, were able to share and collaborate and learn from each other."



Linda Bambara, Ed.D.



Lindsey Biel, M.A., OTR/L

"The majority of people with autism do have something very important in common: dramatic and potentially very disabling sensory issues. So, when we are asking a child to sit down and be quiet, to sustain his attention to a task, to stop self-stimulating and to make eye contact, we need to look at the significant likelihood that this child is experiencing a sensory challenge. If a child is experiencing a sensory problem that occurs because of difficulty with neurological function or being wired differently, he or she can't simply "get over it." We need to help that person's body increase its ability to tolerate sensory stimulation and integrate sensory input from the environment with what is happening inside his or her own body."

2007 Autism Institute

From Obstacles to Opportunities
Understanding Behavior and Strategies to Success

THE KELBERMAN CENTER
AUTISM SERVICES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN
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The Kelberman Center Autism Institute, held on October 18th and 19th at the Radisson Hotel in Utica, was once again a success with over 200 participants from a wide array of disciplines, including special and regular education teachers, school administrators, guidance counselors, preschool staff, aides, service providers (speech, OT, behavior), pediatricians, nurses, daycare owners, disability advocates, consultants, as well as families and persons with autism.

The Autism Institute is an opportunity for nationally-recognized experts in the field of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to come together to provide professional development training for educators and service providers in the northeast. This year's speakers included Jed Baker, Ph.D., Lindsey Biel, M.A., OTR/L, Linda Bambara, Ed.D. and Kathleen Morris, M.S. CCC/SLP; each spoke on topics related to their individual autism perspectives, including Social Thinking, Sensory, Positive Behavior Supports and Language/Communication, respectively.



Pictured right to left: Lindsey Biel, M.A., OTR/L, Kathleen Morris, M.S., CCC/SLP, Jed Baker, Ph.D. and Linda Bambara, Ed.D. during the "Real Life Questions, Real Life Answers" portion of the Institute, where participants were able to question the panel of experts on relevant issues within their lives.



Pictured right to left: Robert Myers of the Kelberman Center and two panel members who spoke during the Institute adult support group panel.



Pictured: The over 200 Autism Institute attendees study their program binders, filled with complete notes and reference materials on the topics covered by the conference speakers.