

Beyond a "Typical" Internship Experience...

The Kelberman Center provides excellent hands-on opportunities for interns to take part in the life-long support of children and adults with autism spectrum disorder. Currently, the Center is hosting two pre-doctoral interns who will be participating in two 12-month rotations at the Kelberman Center and at Community Health and Behavioral Services.

In these positions, they will conduct psychological evaluations and facilitate social skills groups. The Center's previous pre-doctoral intern, Dr. Andrea Chapman, recently joined the Kelberman Center staff in her post-doctoral internship as a psychology fellow.

According to Kelberman Center Executive Director Helen Stepowany,



Dr. Andrea Chapman

"It is rewarding to see our interns thrive through the state-of-the-art training and experience they receive at the Kelberman Center."

In addition to the pre and post-doctoral interns, the Center provided opportunities for three high school interns to work in conjunction with camp counselors at the Awesome Summer Days Camp for children with autism spectrum disorders. The interns helped teach social skills to the campers and in the process gained valuable skills for their futures in human services.

The Center also recently welcomed five students from Colgate University who will be working with clinical and administrative staff to provide state-of-the-art social skills instruction for children with autism in the fall and spring sessions.

Corinne Hursh, Graduate student at Utica College and intern with the Leadership Institute at Utica College under Dr. Dana Hart, is the newest intern at the Center. In her year-long internship, Corinne will work to develop new Kelberman Center programs as well as assist in other agency events. Corinne is excited to be interning at the Kelberman Center, saying,



Corinne Hursh

"I am thankful for the opportunity to work at the premier center for autism in central New York. I know that this experience will lead me where I want to go in the healthcare field. I am happy to be learning every step of the way."

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Autism Outlook

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

Autism Services Expand to Cooperstown

Education is a critical component of life skills training for children with autism spectrum disorders. It is with this in mind that the Kelberman Center has partnered with the Cooperstown Central School District to create a program which reflects best practice in autism education. Specially trained staff are able to provide a unique educational environment to students beyond the typical classroom setting. This environment fosters skills that students can use throughout their daily interactions.

Classroom and district staff has been provided a variety of trainings on issues surrounding autism. From social skills development to functional assessment and behavior intervention plans, faculty members are equipped to celebrate the challenges and savor the success of working with children on the autism spectrum. The program model is designed to provide students the supports they need to thrive, beginning with a ratio of about 1 adult to every 2 students. According to Superintendent Mary Jo McPhail, "With the help of the Kelberman Center, we were able to create an autism support program at Cooperstown Elementary School that meets the needs of our students here in our own community. Thanks to the Kelberman Center, we have built a strong program that focuses on the academic and social needs of our students."



Daniel Stockigt and Ashton Watson

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Staff Spotlight...Medicaid Service Coordinators

Medicaid Service Coordination is a service provided by the Kelberman Center in conjunction with Upstate Cerebral Palsy to assist people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families with obtaining essential services throughout the individual's lifespan. Deanna Puleo and Amanda Zupancic represent the Kelberman Center for Medicaid Service Coordination services and assist individuals with ASD who are three years of age or older who qualify for OMRDD services and Medicaid.

Deanna Puleo, Senior Medicaid Service Coordinator (Sr. MSC) for the Kelberman Center describes her role as "providing individual-directed care in order to build a plan with the family to develop the individual's independence and confidence." Deanna provides essential information about the program to those families who are interested in enrolling into Medicaid Service Coordination and Waiver services. These services may be incorporated into the individualized plan and include comprehensive psychological and neuropsychological



Amanda Zupancic and Deanna Puleo

evaluations, individual and family counseling, educational options, school based consultations, social skills groups, respite opportunities, support groups for parents and adults, Family Resource Center, occupational, physical and speech therapy, access to adaptive equipment, environmental modifications and reimbursement plans for items that benefit the individual.

Amanda Zupancic, an MSC for the Kelberman Center for two years, finds her role as a mobile MSC a highly rewarding job, saying, "building relationships, gaining the family's trust and seeing the growth of the individual from the services I help to provide is an amazing feeling." As a mobile MSC, Amanda is able to work outside of typical work hours to be more available to the individuals and families on her case load, increasing communication and allowing families to access services more frequently. Medicaid Service Coordinators often play an integral role in the lives of individuals with ASD and their families, providing vital links to services as well as emotional support.

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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.

Autism Outlook

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Please call 724-6907 ext. 2302
with questions or comments.

Message From Helen Stepowany Executive Director

Reaching Beyond...these words truly capture the spirit of the Kelberman Center. From its inception in 2005, our goal has been to build upon our programs and to continually enhance our services to reach the hundreds of children and adults with autism spectrum disorder that we support today. In doing so, we create environments that surround each person with the particular supports he or she requires to be successful in the world, from the classroom to a first employment experience to dealing with challenging social situations.



Coinciding with our annual Autism Institute and its theme of "Beyond Adaptations" we too are interested in not merely adapting isolated aspects of a person's environment, but rather creating programs that encompass and support all aspects of a person's life across all stages. This is illustrated in our Cooperstown program for children with autism spectrum disorder, creating specific plans for children throughout their entire day so that they may be successful interacting in the school environment and beyond. Similarly, our adult support group works with adults to facilitate positive interactional skills as well as emotional supports that transcend each session into their daily lives. The Kelberman Center continues to concentrate on supporting the entire individual, facilitating peoples' success...now and beyond.

Kelberman Center Facts and Information

Did You Know?

Our **specialized staff** provides school consultations to over 25 area school districts.

The Kelberman Center offers comprehensive psychological and **neuropsychological assessments**.

The Kelberman Center Awesome Summer Days camp was **recognized as a top program by Autism Speaks**, which awarded grants to only 21 programs out of 370 community applicants.

Our **speaker series is free** to parents, professionals and community members.

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"Beyond Adaptations" 2008 Autism Institute

Each year the Kelberman Center prides itself on the level of expertise of the presenters at its Autism Institute. This year was no exception with Speech Pathologist and autism expert Linda Hodgdon, M. Ed., CCC-SLP, presenting on visual supports and Ross W. Greene, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, speaking on behavioral interventions. The theme of the Institute was "Beyond Adaptations," focusing on creating supports within an individual's life through programs, services and personalized plans designed to take into consideration all aspects of the person's life. The Institute attracted over 170 participants who, in addition to hearing a panel of experts (pictured below), also had an opportunity to ask questions to a panel of adults with autism spectrum disorder and Asperger's syndrome, providing a real-life account of what it is like living with these complex challenges.



Autism Institute participants listen to a panel of experts on autism spectrum disorder, including Robert Myers, Dr. Jean Jacobson and Dr. Danielle Bronk from Upstate Cerebral Palsy and the Kelberman Center (far left and right), with Institute speakers Dr. Ross W. Greene and Linda Hodgdon (center).

News in Autism Research...

Autism currently affects 1 in 150 individuals, making it the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. New research in the field of autism spectrum disorders is released each month. Below are a few important studies that have been recently highlighted:

July Gene Study

A new study released this summer in *Science* has identified 6 gene mutations not previously discovered to be linked with autism. Although genetic mutations have been linked to autism in the past, these particular mutations are affected by environmental response and education, strengthening the case for environmental testing and early intervention.

Gastro-Intestinal Study Published

The Public Library of Science published its study on the gastro-intestinal effects of the MMR vaccine and autism this month. Although the gastro-intestinal disturbances were linked to language regression, no link to the MMR vaccine was found in this study.

IAN Regression Study

The Interactive Autism Network (IAN) released a study this month concerning regression in individuals with autism. This study confirmed that almost half of children with autism demonstrate skill regression before age 3. The skills most affected were speech and language, followed by social skills and then motor abilities and daily living skills. In all, IAN reports that 54% of participants showed a loss of skill or stagnation of skills by age 3. This again supports intensive early intervention and preschool services.

Vaccine Safety Study

The NIH has announced a major grant initiative to fund research into vaccine safety. In particular they are looking to promote projects considering immune responses to vaccines, current vaccination schedules for children, minimizing secondary immunizations, identification of underlying health problems at a molecular level that can contribute to vaccine safety and risk factors for vaccine responses.

Carnegie Mellon Study

Carnegie Mellon released an autism study recently in the *Journal of Social Neuroscience*. This is the first study to identify neurological connections and a specific cause of theory of mind difficulties in individuals with ASD. It is also the first study to measure brain area synchronization and to provide evidence of social network disconnections in the brain.

University of Missouri Early Detection Research

The University of Missouri is conducting a research program using 3D face and brain imaging in an attempt to detect autism earlier. It is hoped that a 3D scan of facial features and brain structure may be a different path to diagnosis than what is currently used.

Kelberman Center Guest Interview: Dr. Jed Baker

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



Dr. Jed Baker

Dr. Baker is a clinical psychologist and director of the Social Skills Training Project, a private organization serving individuals with autism and social communication problems. He also directs social skills training for Millburn Public Schools and is a consultant for several other New Jersey school systems. Dr. Baker has been on the Kelberman Center advisory board since early 2008, providing professional insight to Kelberman Center services.

What are some sources of stress that people with ASD face on a daily basis?

"Typically, individuals with ASD, when threatened or overwhelmed by a particular situation, such as crowds, noises or lights, are prone to become overstimulated and therefore more likely to seem threatened or vulnerable. Many of these individuals have dietary problems which attack them from the inside or they may even experience sleep deprivation. Therefore, individuals with autism have many more reasons than the typical individuals to find the world a scary place."

What can teachers, parents and caregivers do to help those with ASD who are experiencing this stress?

"A perfect example of addressing a child's needs in all aspects of life is that rather than adapting one or a couple of his or her daily activities in school to meet his needs, teachers must take into consideration *all* aspects of his school experience, including recess, would be a more effective approach to dealing with this stress. During recess a child is faced with noise and chaos, including running, chasing and yelling. This an overwhelming situation from the sensory point of view. Therefore, those in the school setting must look and see how this environment of recess can be altered to make more sense to a child with ASD. Providing the child with a quieter play space or giving him or her a detailed schedule of recess activities or options could help to lesson some of these anxieties."

Do you think social skills can/should be worked on in regular education schools? What about schools that limit their responsibility to kids with ASD to only academic needs?

"Social skills should most definitely be taught in all school settings, including regular and special education classrooms. I believe this is built into federal law at transition levels. Children at all levels benefit from social skills training. If a child is isolated socially or under undue stress, this could interfere with his or her academic setting. Types of plans beyond just adapting for individual situations need to be in place, such as the recess scenario we had previously mentioned. Research shows that social skills training is imperative for all children, not just those with ASDs. Social skills training has also helped to curb bullying and raise grades."

Summer Highlights...

In July, the Kelberman Center partnered with Future Horizons, a leading publisher in the world of autism and



Asperger's Syndrome, to host Dr. Tony Attwood, an international presenter on Asperger's Syndrome. Dr. Attwood discussed

strategies to improve social understanding as well as other topics related to children with Asperger's Syndrome, including bullying and anger.

The Awesome Summer Days Camp for 38 campers ages five through fourteen with autism spectrum disorder paired exciting

summertime activities with social skills instruction... skills which remain with the children throughout their entire lives. Special thanks to Senator Griffo, Autism Speaks, Build-A-Bear Foundation, Gorman Foundation and the Dept of Education Fund for the Improvement of Education, for helping to fund this life changing experience.



Bobby Shantz, New York Yankee baseball player, partnered with Coca Cola and Cooperstown CVS for a baseball signing event

during the Hall of Fame weekend. CVS Pharmacy donated half of the proceeds, which totaled \$1,500, to the Kelberman Center to assist in implementation of the Cooperstown school program.

The Kelberman Center Donors

Contributions to the Kelberman Center are what drive the outstanding programs and services which have made such an impact on the lives of the children and adults we support. Autism spectrum disorder is a complex and pervasive disorder which currently impacts 1 in 150 people in the United States. Thank you to all donors who have helped to provide hope and a bright future to so many individuals and families who have been impacted by autism. 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 January 1, 2008 to September 30, 2008.**

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Ms. Mary Brodowski and
Ms. Joann Owens
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Hartnett
Mr. Dan Jenkins
Mr. and Mrs. Don P. Murnane
Mrs. Ellie Pollicove

In Honor of Jimmy Kelly
Ms. Sharon Brodecki

In Honor of Nathan Kentile
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Kentile

In Honor of Timothy Kinney
Ms. Airoko Kinney

In Honor of Jordan LaBarbera
Ms. Therese M. Boehlert
Ms. Barbara Dawes
Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Furgal
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph LaBarbera, Jr.
Ms. Karen M. Moylan
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence J. Moylan
Mrs. Rose C. Moylan
Mr. and Mrs. Terence J. Stanimer

In Honor of Ethan Linder
Mr. and Mrs. Darius Linder
Ms. Eve S. Linder
Mr. Richard Linder

In Honor of Matthew
Ms. Grace Ackerson

In Honor of Ethan McCaffrey
Mr. and Mrs. Edward A. McCaffrey

In Honor of Dr. John Millett
Ms. Margaret Millett

In Honor of Alan and Lindsey Morris
Ms. Gladys S. Morris

In Honor of Matt Morse
Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Casler

In Honor of Molly Myers
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Basara

In Honor of Megan Nicholls
Mr. and Mrs. David Nicholls

In Honor of Nick
Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Kain

In Honor of Brady Orr
Ms. Amy James
Ms. Debby Orr
Mr. and Mrs. William Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. Gary A. Werner

In Honor of Autumn Ritter
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Ritter

In Honor of Alex Pilipczuk
Ms. Karen N. Christensen
Ms. Elaine M. Lopata

In Honor of Robert
Ms. Jane M. Kelsey

In Honor of Mattison Roberts
Ms. Lucretia Hunt
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Pedone
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Roberts

In Honor of Joshua Spears
Ms. Beatrice Spears

In Honor of Daniel Sprock
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sprock
Mr. and Mrs. James Sprock

In Honor of Kim Stedman
Ms. Carol Hind

In Honor of Michael Suppa
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Turi, Jr.