



CMS CHRONICLE

"Dedicated to helping each child reach their full potential..."



Fall 2009

4 Barlows Landing Road, Suite 13 - Pocasset, MA 02559
508-563-5767, Fax: 508-563-5774, www.childrenmakingstrides.com



Happy 10th Anniversary Children Making Strides



It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since our director, Pat Antonellis, began Children Making Strides. In celebration, we have asked for some words of success from parents and families whose lives that have been touched by Children Making Strides. Thank you to the families who wrote in!

"CMS has unlocked so much of Braden's potential. Every member of the staff has been so supportive and committed to Braden's success. We are grateful every day for all that you do." -Kevin & Jennifer, Hanson

"I just want to thank everyone at Children Making Strides for the wonderful job your staff does, especially Brittany. She is wonderful. She worked with my son and I just couldn't believe how much progress he has made. We are so very thankful to have had the opportunity to have had the opportunity to have CMS work with our son. Again, thank you so much. I believe there's hope and it began with Children Making Strides." -The Rebelo family

"Our son Troy was diagnosed with High Functioning PDD-NOS. We had a difficult time communicating with him. Troy has made great "strides" with his therapist (whom he adores) from CMS. Troy's communication and negative/repetitive behaviors have improved tremendously!" Thank you CMS! -Parent



"Children Making Strides was a blessing to our family! Our therapists were so amazing! They helped my now 3 year old son hit milestones and progress in more ways than we ever imagined. I recommend CMS to any family looking into ABA services for their children. I thank CMS for helping my son become who he is today! God Bless you all! You are all Angels to our family!"
Jayden's Mom, Fall River



"My daughter Andrea did not speak at all. She received ABA for 5 weeks before she aged out. After just 5 weeks of treatment she was able to request items, understood to wait and knew to work for rewards. I love CMS and wish I could have had them longer. The staff was wonderful and I consider them family. It was the best thing that ever happened to our family." -Julie in Dartmouth

"All the staff at Children Making Strides have been absolutely the saving grace for my family. I don't know where my family would be without them. I cannot begin to express my gratitude, not only for all that they have helped my daughter achieve, but also for all the help they have offered my family. My daughter is doing things I never thought possible, all thanks to the hard work of this organization." - Kasey's Mom, Norton

"I never thought in such a short amount of time I would see such a huge difference in my son. I interviewed a few choices and went with CMS. Their staff is amazing and extremely helpful. My son absolutely loves his teacher and she will forever be a part of our lives and family. I've seen a sparkle in my son's eyes that I never thought I would see." - Nichole of Taunton

From the Director...

From the Director...

It seems hard to believe ten years have passed since Children Making Strides came into existence. In many ways it seems like it was just yesterday, but my gray hairs prove it otherwise. It started in the back of my living room with a telephone and a folding table and has grown to over 28 staff and hundreds of families and alumni. Sometimes in the craziness of this world we live in I forget what brought me to this point and then I remember...My son's diagnosis of autism at age 22 months. I distinctly remember being told that there was a 75% chance he would be retarded and an 85% chance he would never speak. Those were pretty daunting odds, but I wasn't going to accept them, and therein began my journey which ended at Applied Behavior Analysis. Although we tried many things, I truly believe that ABA was the cornerstone on which my son's recovery was based. Today, my son is 14, an honor roll student and last week performed in a singing solo in front of 800 people. I won't tell you that the journey has been easy, it hasn't. There have been battles fought and many tears shed along the way, but it makes me appreciate even more where we have come from. I was always of the belief that "he had the right to be the best that he possibly could be and no one should limit that". That is where the philosophy of Children Making Strides came from and is our focus still today, ten years later.

Children Making Strides wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the many dedicated therapists and staff who have gone above and beyond to help the children that we have serviced over the years. I also want to thank Tracy Osbahr of the DPH for her guidance, support and hand-holding for the past 10 years. And to my friend Tom Maloney of LADDERS who made me believe that I could actually help my son and other young children on the autism spectrum, when I had no clue as to the path that lay ahead for me. Also a special thanks to the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism, for partnering with us over the past 10 years to sponsor the annual **Autism Update Conference** for parents and educators.

Lastly, I would like to thank the families that have given us the privilege to work with their children over the past 10 years. I know each one is a precious gift and I appreciate the trust and confidence you have shown in Children Making Strides by allowing us to work with them and help each one reach their full potential. It has been a truly wonderful experience to have known them and we are looking forward to those high school graduation pictures in a few years!

Pat Antonellis, M.Ed
Program Director



Children Making Strides UPCOMING EVENTS

"Transition from EI to the School System...Knowledge is Power"

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 from 7-9 pm

Advocate Christine Reilly will explain the process of how special education applies to your child as they transition to the public school system. By understanding how the process works you will know your rights, your child's rights, and how to insure that your child receives the services needed to make effective progress. Topics will include determination of eligibility for services, evaluations, developing an IEP, measurable goals and objectives for your child, placement, and your town's legal obligation to your child. You will also learn what happens at your first IEP meeting and your role in developing your child's first IEP.

"Using the iPhone as a Communication Device"

Tuesday, November 3, 2009 from 6:30-8:30 pm

The **iPhone** is the latest and most convenient device being used by families and school systems to assist children with communication difficulties. It is portable, easy to use, socially acceptable, affordable and with several applications available, can be customized to each child. Icons are downloaded on the device to guide your child through daily schedules, chores, appointments and social stories. The presenters for the program are Lisa and Jeff Johnson, creators of **iCommunicate** (storyboard and routine applications) and **iReward** (a tracking program for earning rewards).

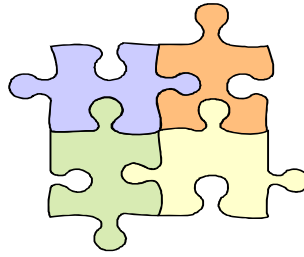
The programs are free and attendees are required to R.S.V.P. to 508-563-5767 or erinb@childrenmakingstrides.com, at which time you will be given the location details.

Therapist Spotlight

Kendra Bakerink



Kendra has been working at CMS for 3 years. She started as a line therapist and is now a program coordinator in the New Bedford area. Kendra earned a degree in sociology from UMass Dartmouth. She heard about CMS while working with teenagers with Asperger's syndrome. Kendra's sunny disposition and dedication to her families make her an outstanding employee and exceptional therapist. When asked about her work, Kendra states: "I love it. It is very challenging. The kids make the job!" The staff at CMS is very fortunate to have such a dedicated therapist.



Vicky Silva and Caitlin Yecker, Children Making Strides ABA therapists, attended the 2009 Walk Now for Autism Speaks in Rhode Island. They attended the walk with one of the families serviced by Children Making Strides.

+Yogabilities

Adapted Yoga classes - Classes for kids, teens, adults. These 1 hr classes employ the use of props such as Yoga flash cards, bean bags, animal figures as appropriate, along with soothing music to introduce Yoga in a fun & accessible way to individuals with developmental disabilities. Classes are designed to encourage generalization of stretch & relaxation into daily life.

Ongoing in Norwood.
Contact for details-The Healing Moon –
Melinda Coppola -781-551-8254



October 19-20, 2009 - Seekonk Social Thinking Conference

Presented by Michelle Garcia Winner, MA CCC-SLP, a pioneer in the field of social thinking, who specializes in the treatment of individuals with social cognitive deficits.

The subjects include 'The Nuts & Bolts of Running Social Thinking Programs' & 'Teaching Beyond the Social Curriculum'

Johnson & Wales Inn, Seekonk, MA
Details on website www.theautismproject.org
Call Claudia Prior 401-785-2666

November 6-7, 2009 - Natick Current Trends in Autism 2009

Friday 9 am-5 pm, Saturday 9 am-2 pm
Crowne Plaza Natick
Call 781-449-6074 or visit www.ladders.org

December 4-5, 2009 - Waltham Outreach Autism Clinic

James Greenblatt, M.D., will see patients on Fri & Sat by appointment only. The goal is to improve the health & well-being of individuals using integrative medicine; in particular, natural & biomedical treatment options. Specialized testing that is not available at traditional labs will be offered.

Call Tish Diablo, 859-261-4503 or go to
www.greatplainslaboratory.com

SAVE THE DATE

10th Annual Doug Flutie Jr. – Children Making Strides Autism Update 2010
will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2010
at the Sheraton Four Points Norwood



Left to Right: Jo-Ann Branzetti, CMS Assistant Director, Matt Branzetti (Jo-Ann's son), Connor Antonellis (Pat's son), Pat Antonellis, CMS Director



Pat Antonellis, Director of Children Making Strides opened an ice-cream and cupcake business, Patti Cakes, at the start of the summer in Pocasset. The idea to add cupcakes to the menu was to help Matthew Branzetti, son of Children Making Strides' Assistant Director Jo-Ann Branzetti, gain work experience. Matthew is on the autism spectrum and began baking when he was young. His mom used baking as a method to teach him math and time skills. He made cupcakes for the new shop and the proceeds went to help him continue his education.



BITS & PIECES



Autism Research Study

Focus: To study the possible causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This study depends on the participation of families who have children with ASD's to better understand ASD, lead to possible earlier diagnosis and improve treatment.

Researchers from Children's Hospital, Boston collect behavioral and genetic information on children diagnosed with ASD, ages 24 months and up, as well as their families. Families receive a detailed report of cognitive, behavioral and developmental observations.

If interested, please contact the research team at 866-962-5826 or ASDresearch@childrens.harvard.edu

Free Passes

Many towns offer free passes to local attractions at your local library if you have a valid library card. Some examples include: **The Boston Aquarium, Heritage Plantation in Plymouth, The Boston Science Museum, The Roger Williams Park Zoo, The Buttonwood Zoo, Cape Cod Children's Museum.** You must call the library and reserve the passes in advance or reserve online, but using these passes can save a substantial amount in admission fees.



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