

Approaches in Child Guidance

...working together to help children and families reach their goals

Spring 2010

Community Child Guidance Clinic
CHILD CENTERED ★ FAMILY FOCUSED

317 North Main Street
Manchester, CT 06042

Tel.: (860) 643-2101

Fax: (860) 645-1470

E-Mail: clinic@ccginc.org



In this Issue:

Since the 1970s, The Autism Society has designated April as National Autism Awareness Month in an effort to raise awareness about autism spectrum disorders and the issues within the autism community. In this issue, we'll look at the ways we support children and families who are coping with issues related to autism spectrum disorders, with a focus on our newest program, Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program. In its second year, Building Blocks has conducted more than thirty autism assessments since it began in 2008 and continues to provide quality assessments to any family that requires an assessment in the state of Connecticut. The program, which originated due to the limited number of resources in the community, is being recognized as providing timely, high-quality, and comprehensive assessments for families who don't have the resources to access other autism assessment services in the community.

Inside:

An Interview with Trish Sloan	1
20th Annual Conference on Autism	2
Third Annual Golf Tournament	3
CCGC School Makes Dolls for Haiti	3

Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program

An Interview with Trish Sloan, Coordinator

Filling a Critical Gap in Community Services

- Q. Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program is in its second year. What kinds of changes have you seen over the two years?
- A. We have been able to assess approximately thirty children over this two-year period. We are fortunate to have been able to form a great team of very professional and experienced assessors. Our services have been introduced and well received throughout the community. In fact, on April 24, our team will be exhibitors at the Statewide Autism Convention.
- Q. Were there any goals you had in mind when creating the program?
- A. Because there was a critical gap in services in our community, when we first conceptualized this program, our goal was to make it easier for families to access the services that they needed in helping their children. We also wanted families to feel as though they had been listened to and treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.
- Q. What makes Building Blocks Autism Assessment program unique?
- A. The assessment is one of the most comprehensive I've seen. When we first began the program, there was a need for more assessment programs within our region. We built the program by consulting with schools, other assessment programs, universities, parents, and providers. We visited other programs to see what worked and what



Trish Sloan, Coordinator,
Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program

Continued on page 2

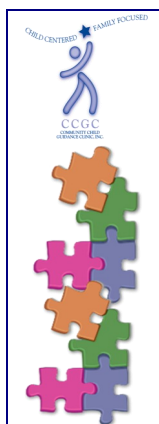
didn't, and then utilizing that information, tried to build our program to meet the need in a timely fashion.

- Q. What happens once an assessment is made? Where do parents go from there?
- A. Once an assessment is complete, some parents may feel overwhelmed and can become confused as to how to access services within their community. While Building Blocks does not endorse one treatment approach over another, we do our best to keep updated on local programs and services, school and family supports. Our reports are completed in notebook form, with copies being provided to the child's school and physician. The reports also contain recommendations that will prove helpful to the family and other providers in knowing how they can best help.
- Q. It must be difficult to meet with a family and discuss the assessment results, particularly if they point toward an autism spectrum disorder.
- A. Many times, by the time a family comes to us, they already have a sense that their child may have an autism spectrum disorder. We request medical and school records to see what assessments and treatments have already been tried, and we take an extensive family history. By the time they have met with us, (which takes approximately one month from start to finish), they will have some sense of where their child is emotionally, cognitively, and medically. Our assessments cover speech and language, psychiatric evaluation, psychological testing, and occupational therapy. While the diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder can be difficult to hear, families can now access the supports that they need to help their children.
- Q. Does Building Blocks collaborate with outside agencies and schools?

A. Yes, we are partnering with new school districts every day. As part of our assessment, we collaborate with schools in making recommendations to optimize treatment outcomes for children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. This occurs under the guidelines of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a program of the Federal Government which mandates a free and appropriate public education for children with learning difficulties. Usually, most children are placed in a public school setting and it is the school district's responsibility to finance speech therapy, occupational therapy, services with a school psychologist and social worker, as well as a school nurse or aide.

- Q. How is the program funded?
- A. Although insurance covers a portion of the cost in the state of Connecticut, it doesn't cover all of our costs. Therefore, grant money, annual Clinic fundraisers, and private donations are absolutely vital in helping to fill in the gaps. When people support Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program, they offer families who couldn't do it in any other a way, a chance to intervene at a critical time.
- Q. Why is it important for families to access services for their children at an early age?
- A. All current research indicates that early intervention leads to better treatment outcomes. In fact, a report from the National Research Council suggests that educational intervention is key in helping children with autism spectrum disorders to develop into competent and productive adults. Therefore, early screenings to detect autism spectrum disorders are important.¹

Reference 1: Educating Children with Autism. Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (2001), 324 pp.; ISBN 0-309-07269-7.



20th Annual State Conference on Autism Featuring Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Peter Gerhardt

The Autism Society of Connecticut (ASCONN) will present its 20th State Conference on Autism, Saturday, April 24, 2010, at the Hartford Marriott Downtown in Hartford, CT. This full-day conference will feature guest speakers, Temple Grandin, PhD, and Peter Gerhardt, PhD, President of the Organization for Autism Research. Dr. Grandin will discuss her life with autism, as well as practical strategies for helping those with autism spectrum disorders. Dr. Gerhardt will review highlights from the latest autism research and talk about how these findings are shaping best-practice interventions. In addition, he will present strategies that can be incorporated at school, home, and other settings. This year, Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program will be exhibitors at the conference. Team members will be distributing bookmarks (pictured on the left), made by the students of the Community Child Guidance School.

Third Annual Golf Tournament: Improve your Golf Swing and the Lives of Children in the Community

Your Support Makes a Difference

Please join us for the Third Annual Golf Tournament to be held on Wednesday, June 2, 2010, at the Manchester Country Club, 305 South Main St., Manchester, CT. Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m. and the event will start at 1:00 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Building Blocks Autism Assessment Program and other Clinic programs. The entry fee is \$130 with a discounted rate of \$120 for golfers who sign up before May 1, 2010. Included in the fee is lunch, dinner, a raffle, and prizes.

Last year, ninety golfers participated and raised approximately \$23,000. This year, the Clinic hopes to raise more funds so that it can continue to provide quality programs for children in the community. If you would like to register, become a sponsor, or make a donation, please call (860) 643-2101, or email law@ccgcinc.org. Contributions are tax deductible.



Community Child Guidance School CCGC Students Make Dolls for Haitian Children *Actualizing the Six Pillars of Learning*



Stuffing the felt dolls at
CCGC School



Children with the
handmade dolls

The forty-two students of Community Child Guidance School have been busy working on a special project that will serve the children in orphanages in Haiti by providing them with beautiful, handmade, felt dolls that can be used for play or as pillows. The project was organized by Gail Davis, a volunteer of the CCGC School, who brings her three dogs, Zoe, Bindi, and Harmony to the school to be used for pet therapy twice a week. Earlier in the year, Gail Griffith, Speech-Language Pathologist, CCGC School, had organized a fundraiser where the school made and sold dog biscuits. The proceeds were to go to Ms. Davis's pet therapy organization, Allen's Angels, at Bolton Veterinary Hospital in Bolton, CT. However, when the recent earthquake occurred, Ms. Davis had a change of heart and asked that the proceeds go toward the purchase of materials to make the dolls for the children in Haiti.

Ms. Davis had been working on making the dolls in collaboration with The Bethesda Evangelical Ministries, who work with two Haitian orphanages C.U.R.E. (Copprome Orphanage) and HELO Orphanage, just outside of Port-Au-Prince. The pastor of the Ministries has been visiting Haiti every two weeks with food, medication, clothing, and now, the dolls.

Ms. Davis was excited about the opportunity to work on the manufacture of the dolls with the CCGC School, as it would allow her to make and send more dolls while helping the children of the school become involved in an important cause. In addition, according to Gail Griffith, "The project has been a wonderful way for the children to actualize the six pillars of learning that are a part of the children's everyday curriculum, as it has taught them the importance of trustworthiness, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring, and respect for others."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ellen Marmer, M.D., Vernon
President

Roger Cady, Lebanon
First Vice President

Alana Parkinson, Manchester
Second Vice President

Craig Rogers, Manchester
Secretary

Kathleen Peters, Mansfield
Treasurer

Approaches

In Child Guidance
a publication of

Community Child Guidance Clinic, Inc.
317 North Main St.
Manchester, CT 06042
Telephone: (860) 643-2101
Email: clinic@ccgcinc.org

MEMBERS

Brina Abrahams, Vernon

Grace Flores, Manchester

Pam Reichelt, Manchester

Gil Russo, Manchester

Robert Schaefer, Vernon

Daniel Wright, Vernon

MAIL TO:



*Serving: Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry, East Hartford, Ellington,
Glastonbury, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, South Windsor,
Stafford/Stafford Springs, Tolland, Vernon/Rockville*

MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION IS TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY
BY PROVIDING A SYSTEM OF
CHILD CENTERED AND FAMILY FOCUSED
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DESIGNED
TO MAINTAIN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN
THEIR HOME AND COMMUNITY.

If you would like to receive future newsletters electronically, please send an email to law@ccgcinc.org. Please include the words "Email Newsletter" in the subject line. Your privacy will be protected as email addresses will remain confidential and will not be sold or shared with third parties.