

OUTLOOK



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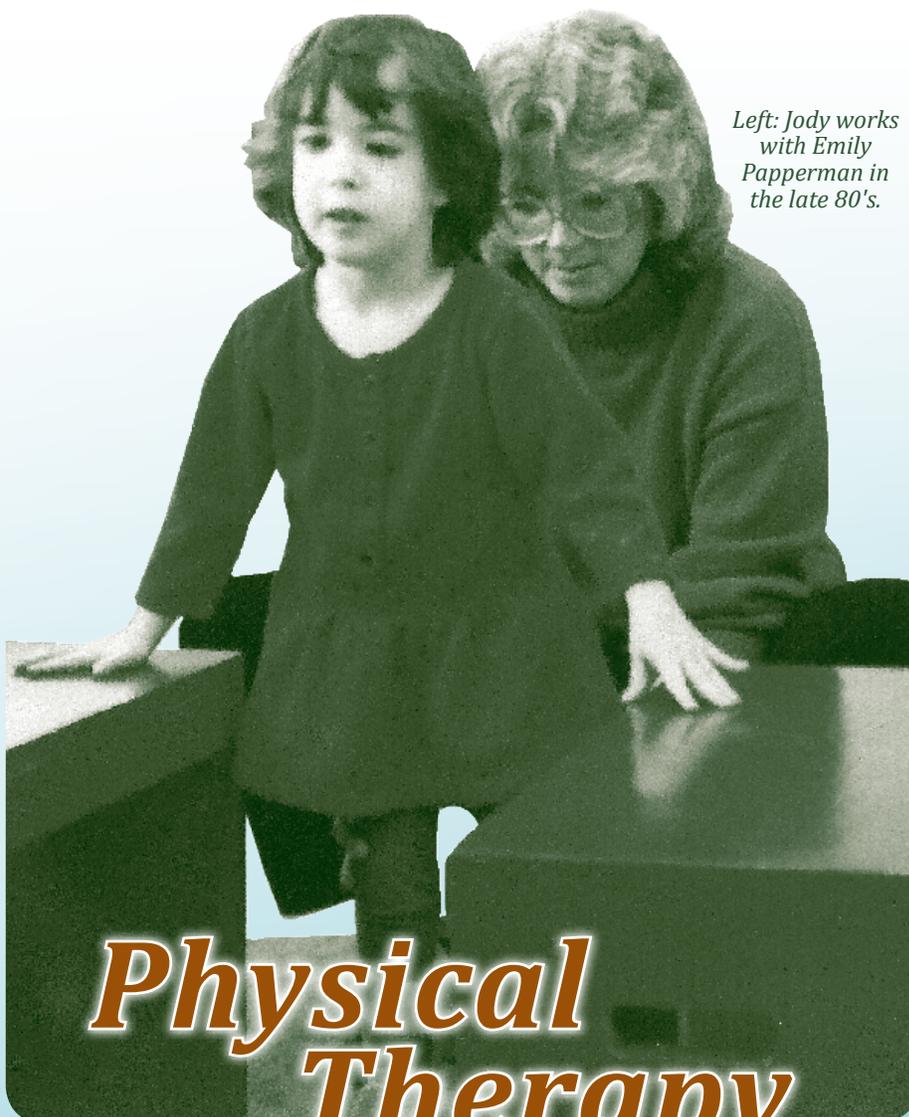
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Making Room

"What makes the Physical Therapy Department at Racker Centers so unique is that often the therapists see kids starting at such a young age and continue to work with them through the school years," says Jody Scriber, Director of Clinical and Educational Services...



Left: Jody works with Emily Papperman in the late 80's.

Physical Therapy

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Roger Sibley, Executive Director



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I am addicted to coffee. And it does not appear to worry me too much. Esteemed medical journals like Reader's Digest periodically publish articles about the dangers of drinking too much coffee, followed by articles on the benefits the beverage provides. When it was announced that five cups of coffee could cause a heart attack, I bought a bigger mug and limited myself to four.

Many states, New York primarily, are addicted to Medicaid. It happened because there are many benefits. Medicaid is flexible, can be used for a wide range of needs and a variety of ways. Medicaid also allows states to at least double their money. Anything a state chooses to spend is matched by a Federal dollar. So states could "afford" to do more, spend more. And there is the addictive trap.

So how does New York particularly control its addiction? The commonly held view is that Medicaid is a problem of spending more than we can afford. So the solution is to spend less. The Governor's budget proposal cuts \$2.7 billion in state spending, which because of the match totals around \$5.5 billion less going to services. The state share would go from \$20.8B to around \$18B. This is on top of cuts implemented over the past few years.

If we reframe the question and suggest that the problem with Medicaid is cost, we keep the outcome of reduced spending but we think about the problem differently. Federal Medicaid is a high-control program, lots of rules and regulations and reporting requirements. New York then adds more controls, all of which make things more expensive.

Total Quality Management was popular a number of years ago. One of its tenets is that each step in a process needs to add value. New York's Medicaid program provides many opportunities for streamlining and focusing which can result in lower costs and greater effectiveness.

In order to make services cost less, we would have to change how we do things. And this is where government is weak. Once a program is put in place, it is never evaluated, never examined to see if the outcomes are being reached and the costs are in line. If we are to solve our budget problems without sacrificing our most vulnerable citizens, we need to find a way.

Physical Therapy...continued from cover

"The earlier we start working with an individual the more time we have to help them develop good habits. Also, the physical therapists are able to teach parents how to help their kids move properly so there is reinforcement between therapy sessions."

Racker Centers currently employs 15 physical therapists that work at the agency's own locations in Cortland, Tioga and Tompkins County and in homes and private settings in the community. Additionally, Physical Therapy (PT) services are contracted to area schools including Ithaca, Lansing, Dryden, Groton, Newfield, Trumansburg, Candor, Spencer-VanEtten, BOCES, and local private schools such as Montessori. "Our PT's are a highly trained group of individuals that are innovative and committed to finding a way to meet the needs of those they serve," says Jody. Of their partnership with schools Jody says, "Often a physical therapist can be a resource of information to educators and aides about the needs of an individual because there is a longevity and consistency of the service provider that doesn't exist in other areas."

Emily Papperman, now 25 years-old, started receiving Early Intervention Physical Therapy through Racker Centers at 8 months of age to aid in the development of her gross motor skills impacted by Cerebral Palsy. Emily recalls that the activities she did during therapy sessions focused on balance, stability, strength and stretching. Emily continued receiving therapy through Racker Centers' physical therapists as she got older, with her sessions being part of her school day during elementary and middle school in the South Seneca School District. "In high school I took a bus to the elementary school on certain days for PT and throughout the years I swam at Cass Park with Amy (Haefner)," recalls Emily. "As I got older,

my understanding of these sessions grew and I understood more clearly the need for physical therapy." Amy, a physical therapist at Racker since the early nineties, remembers working with Emily saying, "She was always a pleasure to see! Even as a youngster she set high standards for herself both academically and in maximizing her physical capabilities." It was through Emily's determination and Racker Centers' committed therapists that Emily was able to achieve one of

THERE IS A LONGEVITY AND CONSISTENCY OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER THAT DOESN'T EXIST IN OTHER AREAS.

her long-term goals and walk to the stage to receive her high school diploma. "It's important to have a good PT you relate to, because if they are supportive and encouraging you are more likely to succeed," Emily comments.

Now a graduate of Endinboro University of Pennsylvania, Emily works as a Peer Counselor at the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) in Ithaca, NY. Part of her role is to conduct presentations to educate people on disabilities. Last year she presented to Ithaca College students in the Culture of Disabilities class that Jody Scriber was then teaching. "Emily came and talked to them about how people

viewed her in college and the assumptions they would make," says Jody, "she was truly quite remarkable." Described by Amy as a "motivated, dedicated, and talented person who is truly successful in her life," Emily feels her experience with physical therapy made a big impact. "It shaped the scope of how I view physical activity because the flexibility and strength training taught me habits that have enabled me to maintain my independence. The therapists at Racker taught me the importance of regular movement, they were all great. My experience with physical therapy from such a young age has made a big difference in my life," she concludes.

Children must be referred through their County Health Department Early Intervention Program, their school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) or Committee on Special Education (CSE) for an evaluation. If a child qualifies, the committee will meet to add the services to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and goals are established. A prescription is needed from the child's pediatrician.



Emily, now 25 years old, works at Finger Lakes Independence Center as a Peer Counselor.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION HIRED

In November of 2010, Franziska Racker Centers welcomed Barbara Patten as the new Director of Special Education in Tioga County. Entering the position with twenty-nine years of experience

RACKER CENTERS SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN TIOGA COUNTY SERVES NEARLY 40 CHILDREN

in special education, Barbara most recently worked within the Dryden school district as Director of Student Services. Of her position Barbara says, "I'm so excited to be here, working for an agency that has competent, caring,

fully connected to this community."

Barbara replaces Dave McNamara, who served as the Special Education Director in Tioga County for the past three years and leaves the agency for a well-earned second retirement. "It was really a privilege to work with this group of talented, dedicated and courageous people, who work for the children and families on a daily basis," says Dave. "However, I have done this work for forty years, and it is time for me to pursue some new adventures. What is really fabulous is that the ideals and the effort of the Racker Centers staff will continue, and that I can stay connected to the organization in other ways."

Comerford, Director of Pupil Personnel Services at Owego Apalachin Schools states, "I call Dave for his insight into things because of his experience. Dave was very hands-on and an advocate for the students first and foremost. He based things on research and best practices. I very much look forward to working with Barbara and continuing to work with Franziska Racker Centers."

In looking forward, Barbara has some clear ideas about her new role and embraces Franziska Racker Centers'

BARBARA COMES TO RACKER CENTERS WITH TWENTY-NINE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

mission of helping people with special needs and their families have good lives, "Our agency's mission funnels down to what we do here in Tioga every day," says Barbara. "We want to help preschool children, we want others to accept them, and we want to give them the help they need to be successful in our community."

Barbara has three sons, the youngest of whom also works for Franziska Racker Centers. Her husband works for the American Red Cross and is in charge of emergency services for ten counties, including Tioga, Tompkins and Cortland. She hopes to utilize his expertise in the future when updating emergency planning procedures at the agency's preschool locations. Barbara will also be working closely with the preschool special education teachers at Wilkins Road in Tompkins County and the preschool in Cortland County. Additionally she also stays busy as a fitness instructor at Four Seasons Fitness studio in Owego.

Franziska Racker Centers' Special Education program in Tioga County serves nearly 40 children in the Washington Gladden location as well as in the Spencer-VanEtten school district. Owego schools have found partnering with the agency very helpful. Tom



Barbara Patten with former Special Education Director Dave McNamara, Director of Clinical and Educational Services Jody Scriber.

passionate people, and that has the same values that I also have for myself." Barbara is also happy to be working just a few miles from her home. "I've lived here for 28 years, been involved in the schools through my own children's sports and other activities, and I am

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Cal Organ has lived and worked in Tompkins County for many years. He retired from BorgWarner Morse TEC after being employed there from 1970 through 2009 working in various positions from Operations to Human Resources. Cal and his wife, Joan, reside in the Trumansburg area. Cal is active in the Trumansburg Central School District and serves on the Trumansburg Central School District Foundation. He has held numerous Board positions including Cayuga Medical Center, McGraw Housing, and Tompkins County United Way.



Elizabeth Gesin and her family have lived in Cortland, NY for most of their lives. Liz has a background in the Health Education field and worked in the Syracuse School Districts prior to caring for her three children full-time. Currently Liz works part-time at a family owned restaurant in Cortland, takes course work at Tompkins Cortland Community College and teaches classes at her church while remaining active in her children's school district. Liz and her family were introduced to Racker Centers when her youngest son began receiving services at age two through Early Intervention.



David McNeil is a native of Cortland, NY and resides there now with his wife, Christine, and three children. A graduate of Cornell University, David went on to specialize in the building and management of commercial properties in Central NY at McNeil Development Co., LLC. David previously served as a board member when the agency was named The Special Children's Center and is pleased to join Franziska Racker Centers' Board again. David has also served on the Board of the ARC of Cortland County. In his spare time, David remains active in Little League in the town of Homer and with St. Mary's School and St. Mary's Church in Cortland, NY.



SNAPSHOT RACKER a quick look at past, current, and future happenings!

- January 20, 2011 — Third Thursdays Family Events: The Magic Paintbrush Project
- January 26, 2011 — Cortland Parent Network: Tools to Help your Child Communicate
- February 15, 2011 — Cortland Parent Network: Transitioning from Preschool Special Education to School Age Services
- February 17, 2011 — Third Thursdays Family Events: The Magic Paintbrush Project
- March 15, 2011 — Cortland Parent Network: Guardianship, Social Security, and Legal Issues

FOR INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT WWW.RACKERCENTERS.ORG

CHAMP PROGRAM

The Cortland Homer Afterschool Mentorship Program (CHAMP), held at the JM McDonald Sports Complex in Cortland, gives youth ages 5 through 12 a healthy and safe afterschool destination. The program, started by Dr. Tim Davis, Adapted Physical Education Associate Professor at SUNY Cortland, was created as a means to provide students enrolled in Dr. Davis' Motor Development Course a way to earn service learning hours and provide a platform for the students to engage children in motor development



Pictured (L to R): Deanna, Aly (CHAMP student), and Amy Marks at Sports Complex

activities. The college students mentor those that attend CHAMP stressing the importance of education, nutrition and physical activity. The young students that attend the program receive daily physical activity including ice skating, turf time, and individual skill development; homework help that includes organization, creative activities, and positive reinforcement; and a 10 minute "Snack Attack" lesson on nutrition that includes a healthy snack.

Amy Marks, a Community Support Staff (CSS) at Racker Centers, learned of the CHAMP program through her studies at SUNY Cortland as a Physical Education Major. As a CSS at Racker Centers, Amy worked with Deanna, an enthusiastic young woman with Down syndrome. Together they attended the CHAMP program to mentor program participants and be active in the community. "Deanna and I went to the program about once a week and she did a variety of things," says Amy. "She helped the younger students with their homework, crafts, or read to them when they completed activities. She engaged in physical activity with them or helped be the judge or referee during games. The kids really warmed up to her and they got a great experience having



Deanna (right) helps Aly with a craft project during CHAMP program

Deanna as a mentor and understanding more about individuals with special needs."

Dr. Davis agrees saying, "Deanna has been wonderful, she is engaged and involved with all ages. The children enjoyed Deanna and several became very close, always asking about her or looking forward to seeing her. The peer-mentorship aspect where Deanna is a role model and leader for younger age children is great. The students view Deanna as a truly capable person and they value her at the program."

CHAMP, which is staffed by graduate and undergraduate students majoring in physical education, is held weekdays from 3:30-6pm and is open to children of all abilities. Individuals with special needs are encouraged to attend. For more information contact the JM McDonald Complex at 607-753-8100.

ROGER SIBLEY TO BE CELEBRITY DANCER AT KTC EVENT

With the completion of their beautiful new theatre and their 20th Anniversary, the Kitchen Theatre Company (KTC) has much to celebrate this year! They are kicking off 2011 with a fundraising gala at the theatre scheduled for March 19th at 8pm. Local celebrities have generously volunteered to entertain by dancing at the event.



The celebrity couples include:

- **Our very own Executive Director Roger Sibley** and Lesley Greene, KTC Associate Producing Director
- KTC President Emeritus Percy Browning and Stephen Nunley, KTC Managing Director
- United Way President James Brown and Kara Taylor, M&T Bank Relationship Manager and Franziska Racker Centers Board Member
- Hangar Theatre Artistic Director Peter Flynn and Rachel Lampert, KTC Artistic Director
- Ithaca College Theatre Arts Professor Greg Bostwick and Laurie Linn, Communiqué Design & Marketing President

The KTC will raise funds through ticket sales and the sponsorship of the celebrity dance couples. Attendees will enjoy food, open bar and dancing. To purchase tickets, sponsor dancers or get more information visit, www.kitchentheatre.org/ danceparty or contact Lindsay Hahnes, KTC Director of Marketing and Development at 272-0570 or lindsay@kitchentheatre.org.

WWW.RACKERCENTERS.ORG HAS A NEW LOOK!

Franziska Racker Centers has launched their new website.

The new design and layout reflects the agency's array of services for individuals and their families. The site includes success stories, employment opportunities and information about the areas of programming and resources available to the communities that Racker Centers serves.

Please take a moment to visit our site and check out the improvements. From there you can connect with us on our Facebook fan page at facebook.com/franziskarackercenters or at our blog which can be found at www.rackercenters.blogspot.com.



"STARRY NIGHT" RESPITE TO OPEN THIS SUMMER

Racker Centers' free-standing respite house, "Starry Night" is currently under construction. Upon completion the house will support individuals who are developmentally disabled and in need of respite services in Cortland and the surrounding areas. Respite services allow primary caregivers the opportunity to take a well-deserved rest or break from the daily challenges of caretaking. Respite services also address the physical and emotional stress associated with being a

primary caregiver for an extended period of time.

The respite house will be staffed by trained counselors and nursing personnel who will provide support services and supervision of the residents under the direction of a residence manager. The typical period of stay for a guest will be two or three consecutive days with a maximum stay of 30 days.

The goal is for the house to open and begin supporting those in need by July 1st of 2011. It is anticipated that within the first year of operations the program will be open 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The house will serve both children and young adults. Thank you to M&T Bank for their support with a start-up grant of \$5,000 which will be used to purchase supplies for the house upon completion.



"Starry Night" free-standing respite is currently being constructed.





WILD CARDS, WILD TIMES!

It was a crisp and sunny day this past October when fifteen guys trouped up the stadium stairs at SUNY Cortland. They were all set to watch the Red Dragons lock horns with Montclair State. The football tickets, courtesy of the SUNY Cortland athletics department, enabled the entire Wild Cards group to attend the game. Full of pizza from earlier in the day, they settled in their seats, smiling and laughing, primed for pigskin action. The stadium trembled as Cortland took the

field, spectators stamping wildly, shock waves spreading through the tight-knit group. "Go Cortland!" yelled one of the guys, encouraging his comrades to form a chorus. This is the essence of Racker Centers' Wild Cards, a program for young men with developmental disabilities who gather regularly to share stories, explore common interests, and generally just have fun. The program has been growing in recent months as word gets around. Other recent events include a cookout at Little York Lake, a holiday movie/video game party, and bowling. Food plays a key role in the bonding process as well. On a snowy night in

December, participants ate hot dogs that were cooked on a roller-style hot dog machine. Some guys played Nintendo Wii and Xbox in a makeshift game room while others watched the Christmas classic *Earnest Saves Christmas*.

Harold Baker, a regular participant who coined the group's name, said, "I love getting together and hanging out. I've really enjoyed all the activities so far." Harold also recalled getting to know another guy his age: "He came up to me and asked 'How are things going?' and now we're friends. It's great when you meet new people."
 - Austin MacRae, Family Resource Assistant

SPINKNITTERS DONATE WARM WINTER WEAR

The Ulysses Spinknitters is a group of knitters, spinners and fiber art crafters, ranging from beginner level to advanced crafters. The group meets weekly to share ideas and skills, working on individual projects as well as group projects (helmet liners for our troops, quilt for the Ulysses Library).



The group is sponsored by the Ulysses Philomathic Library and feels that it is important to donate their time and talents. Recently, they donated two boxes of beautifully knitted mittens, hats, and sweaters to the children and families served by Franziska Racker Centers. Amy Haefner, a member of the Spinknitters, acts as the liaison for the group with Racker Centers because Amy works for the agency as a Physical Therapist.



The group is happy to work together with the community and have fun sharing their talents. You can join them at their weekly meetings every Thursday at 1:30pm at the Ulysses Philomathic Library.

The Ulysses Spinknitters group has been meeting for a little over two years, and welcomes anyone and everyone to come and join them. They welcome all ages and all levels of knitting and spinning.

Members of the Ulysses Spinknitters Group (left to right): Amy Haefner, Polly Gutelius, Sarah Mehta, Suzanne Logue, Judy Lodder, Mary Blake

THANK YOU BUSINESS PARTNERS

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- The Lane Family Fund of the Community Foundation
- Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County
- J.M. McDonald Foundation
- McKinnon Marketing Group
- Northwestern Mutual
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- Sertoma Club of Ithaca
- The George V. and Jean A. Smith Charitable Trust
- The Solstice Group
- Tioga United Way
- Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund
- Tompkins Trust Company
- Triad Foundation
- United Way for Cortland County
- United Way of Tompkins County
- Vector Magnetics
- Wegmans Food Markets



For more information on making a donation to Franziska Racker Centers, call Perri LoPinto at 607.272.5891 Ext. 234 or email perri@rackercenters.org.

You can also make a donation online at www.rackercenters.org.

When you become a Friend of Racker Centers, you help us provide people with disabilities the services, supports and opportunities they need to do things that are important to all of us: learn, have new experiences, enjoy friends and family, and be contributing members of our communities.

UNRESTRICTED ANNUAL SUPPORT Allows us to respond to areas of immediate need.

BOHN FAMILY FUND Created by Donna and Tom Bohn, provides resources and supports for families with children having special needs.

FRANCES G. BERKO LECTURESHIP FUND Created with a leadership gift from the J.M. McDonald Foundation in memory of Dr. Berko, the Centers' executive director from 1964 to 1974. It supports community education and professional development for those working in the disability field.

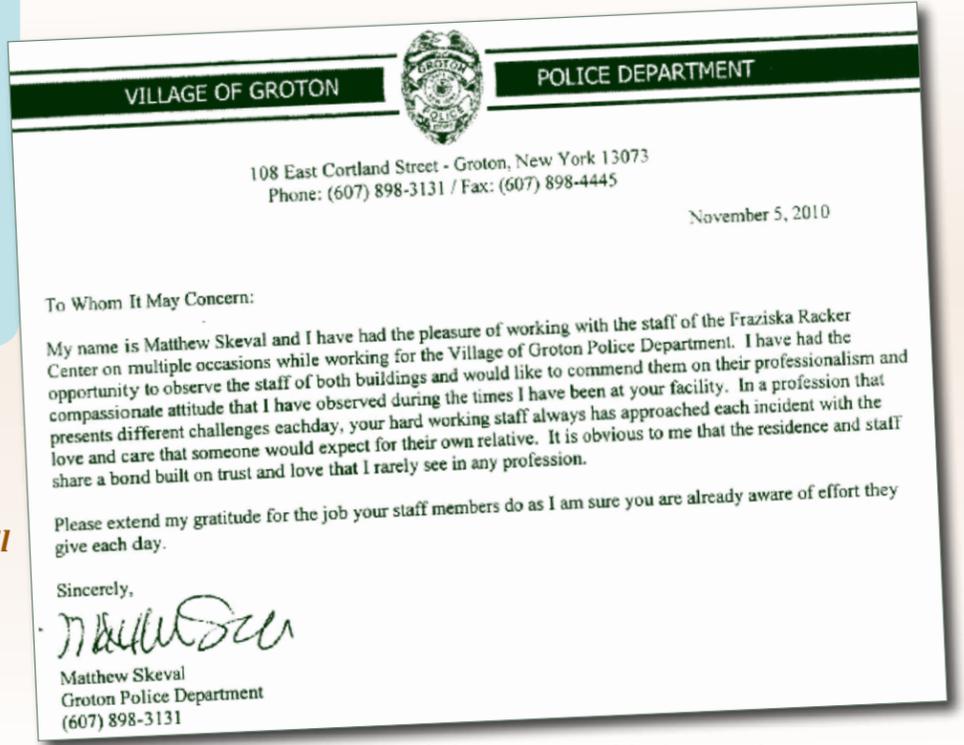
FRANCES V. WILSON MEMORIAL FUND Created by Margaret Gibson, provides financial support for needed items not covered by traditional funding sources.

FRANZISKA W. RACKER MEMORIAL FUND Created in memory of our former medical director and the agency's namesake, supports early childhood services, an area that was dear to Dr. Racker's heart.

RICHARD M. LEAVITT, M.D. MEMORIAL FUND Created by Judy Leavitt and her sons, provides support for special experiences for children and young adults with disabilities.

SCRIBER/CASH FAMILY FUND Created by Jody and Kent Scriber and David and Lori Cash, supports community-based experiences for preschool/elementary age children with special needs.

TOMPKINS TRUST COMPANY BRIDGE FUND Supports otherwise unfunded clinical services for children throughout the year.



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ADAPTING FOR ANGELS

"What would it actually be like if you were given an angel to take care of and raise as best you could?"

An angel may or may not speak your language. They would grow to be enormous, or maybe really tiny. They might not learn to use the toilet. It would be difficult to find them the right doctors, the right schools. It would be hard to get them dressed, and there would always be things breaking and huge messes from those enormous wings crashing around and us trying all we can to adjust our square house to the angel's huge, rounded shape."

-An excerpt from "Angels", an essay by Elvina Scott from her collection of writings entitled *Epilepsy: A Family Love Story*

Colby Rose is a bright eyed five year-old, and a Kindergarten student at Cayuga Heights Elementary School. She loves "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and her favorite CD is Cat Power's "The Greatest." She has a deep intuition about people's emotions and communicates with her expressive eye contact. She also loves to play her tiny red piano and will indicate her mood by how she plays. Colby also has severe epilepsy which causes frequent seizures and has affected development of her verbal skills.

Last year Colby's parents, Elvina and Craig, attended their Individual Education Planning (IEP) meeting for the transition from pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten. Elvina describes that meeting saying, "Initially I was frustrated but I quickly realized that no one was against us, everyone was trying to find out what Colby needs. Despite the fact that everyone there had experience working with children with special needs, that didn't make them an expert on Colby, every child is an individual."

At that point Elvina began to focus on how to best communicate who Colby was and what she needed to thrive, and found the "angel" metaphor from her writing coming to mind. "I began to think about what my 'angel' needed in the kindergarten setting," she says, "and the angel image helped force my creative thinking and deepen my advocacy for my child. It is a metaphor for how different children can be from each other and how far they are from the world of adults in many ways. Their needs are great. Colby's needs are great." The conversation between Elvina and Craig and with Colby's pre-K team centered around this image: here is the "square house" of a classroom in a school, how do we affect that environment to be a place where our "angel" Colby can thrive along with her peers?

Elvina describes the level of detail and consideration that the pre-K teachers and therapists put into their recommendations for what Colby's Kindergarten day would look like. "It was incredibly perceptive and entirely based on who Colby was as a mind, as a learner, as a little human "angel" being who loves learning, being at school surrounded by activity, stimulation and her peers."

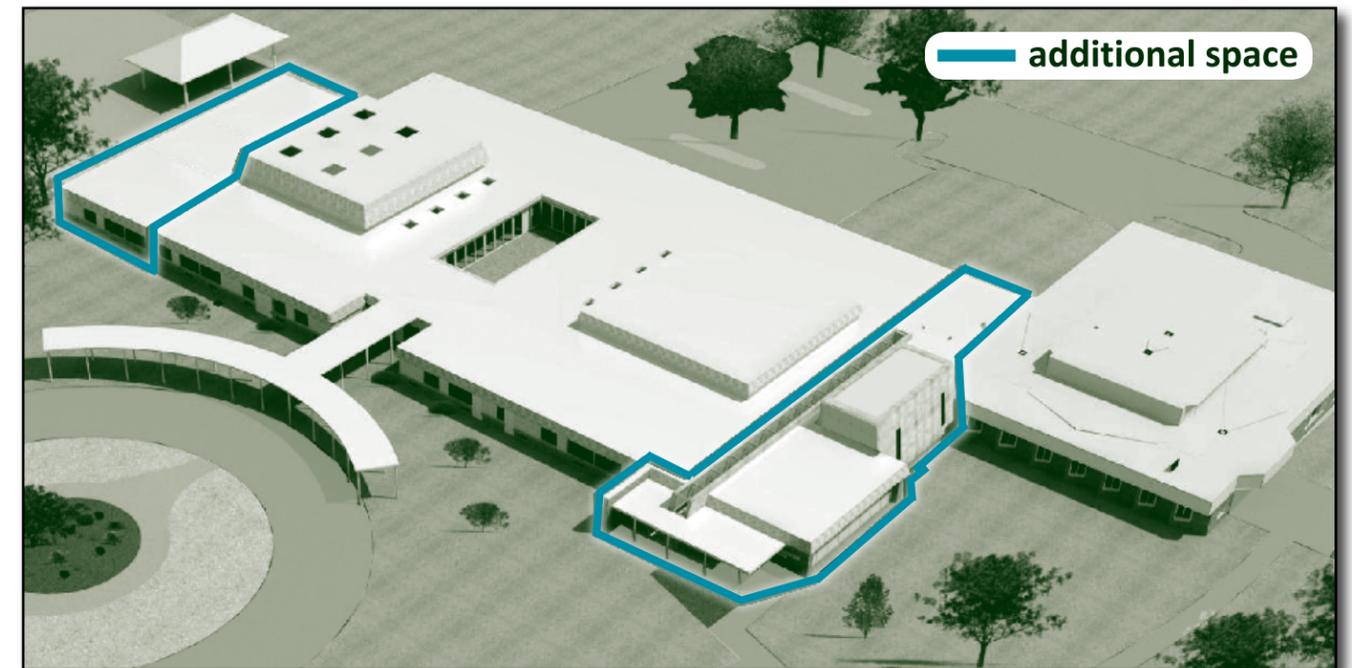
"Today Colby is thriving in Kindergarten. All the progress that has been made has everything to do with the educators, therapists and administrators that are making Colby's integration into Kindergarten a success and her IEP goals come to life. From the moment she puts her coat on in the morning and greets the school bus with an ecstatic smile, through her special time with Ms. Heather and her team, bonding with her peers in class and on the playground, to adaptive PE and home again, she is learning." And Elvina adds, "All kids are angels, defenseless, pure, and completely curious about the world around them. As adults it is our honor and privilege to care for these angels, to provide everything we can for them. We as a family are grateful to be in a community that places such a high regard on children's (our angels) education."



Elvina and Colby

Elvina Scott is a writer and photographer. "Epilepsy: A Family Love Story" is a year of weekly writings about life in a family with a daughter with severe epilepsy. The full story is available at www.elvinascott.com. Colby receives services through Franziska Racker Centers' Respite Program.

MAKING ROOM: CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION



Architectural drawing of additional and improved space.

Improvements to the Margaret Gibson Preschool on the Wilkins Road Campus will Include:

Reconfigure and renovate our 50 year-old 27,000 sq. foot preschool facility:

- Removing the antiquated ceiling-based radiant heating system and installing an updated heating and cooling system with proper insulation and soundproofing
- Completing asbestos abatement throughout the building
- Renovating preschool classrooms
- Re-organizing and renovating our therapy rooms

Add 8,400 square feet of new space:

- Creating a Learning Center with two training areas that can accommodate up to 200 people
- Adding two updated classrooms
- Enhancing and using space more efficiently for our community-based programs
- Increasing the number of meeting areas
- Reconfiguring space more efficiently for support functions
- Creating a unified public entrance for the campus

The urgency of these needs have helped us to see that we need to move quickly to address the required updates in the building. We have decided to begin construction July 1st. Every gift large or small takes us one step closer to completion. We are at \$2.45M of our needed \$3.5M goal! Your support makes a difference!

Call Perri LoPinto at 272.5891 Ext. 234 to learn more and to find out how you can help us "Make Room!"

RACKER CENTER SITES:

TOMPKINS COUNTY SITES:
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 RACKER CENTERS ADMINISTRATION**
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CORTLAND COUNTY SITES:
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OCM BOCES
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 TEL: 607.758.5203 FAX: 607.753.9546

TIOGA COUNTY SITE:
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SPRING 2011

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



MISSION

We are dedicated to helping people with special needs and their families have good lives, with opportunities to learn, to be responsible, to feel cared for, to share, to be connected to others. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusion in our community, celebrating the richness that diversity and interdependence bring.

VISION

We are inspired by the vision of our founding families: that all people with disabilities will be valued members of a welcoming and supportive community.

EDITOR Heather Hughes, Director of Public Relations

DESIGN Dawn Bricen LaMorte, SUNRISE STUDIOS DESIGN www.SunriseStudiosDesign.com

CONTRIBUTORS Heather Hughes, Dawn Bricen LaMorte, Austin MacRae



Karen Fried, Psy.D BCBA, Director of Autism Services at Racker Centers with Nick D'Addario, son of former Board of Directors Member Kate O'Connell. Karen and Nick, along with other staff from the Centers, represented the agency at the October 3rd, 2010 Central NY Autism Walk for Autism Speaks in Liverpool, NY.