

OUTLOOK



Supporting People with Disabilities

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Kim Barthel Inspires and Educates During "Decoding the Autistic Brain" Seminar

by Patrick Schloupt, Preschool Special Education Teacher

In December of 2015, Franziska Racker Centers hosted a four day event, "Decoding the Autistic Design," that brought service providers, community members, and parents together to explore the relationship between neurobiology and autism. On day one, a fully packed Sibley Conference room listened to Kimberly Barthel OTR/L, C/NDT, well-known occupational therapist with over 30 years of experience, speak about how this relationship is more apparent than one could imagine. Known for her work in sensory processing, neurobiology, and attachment theory, Kim is also a teacher, researcher, speaker, facilitator, and writer.

Kim has an incredible ability to break down dense theory and then articulate this information in a way that is more easily understood. This ability kept her day one audience actively engaged. And by the end of the first day, each member of her audience came away with simple, yet applicable information that could be used in their personal and professional lives.

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FROM THE DESK OF DAN BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"In difficult economic times, we must protect key social programs including funding for housing, healthcare, children's programs and combating hunger. There are fiscally prudent ways to balance a growing budget deficit without gutting the programs for the neediest and most vulnerable New Yorkers. We must ensure that critical programs receive adequate funding to protect vulnerable children and families." - Andrew Cuomo



The above statement was made by our Governor just a few years ago. Yet each year we find ourselves in a battle for the resources needed so people with disabilities can lead fulfilling lives. Our New York State constitution also covers the responsibility the state has in this matter:

ARTICLE XVII of the New York State Constitution on SOCIAL WELFARE states in Section 1. "The aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state and by such of its subdivisions, and in such manner and by such means, as the legislature may from time to time determine"

How we provide and care for all of our citizens speaks to who we are as a society. Is our Governor living up to his responsibilities? One might wonder as we have seen him, year after year, cut the funding non-profit agencies receive to provide these critical services. And now he supports a minimum wage increase but hasn't funded it in his budget. This final unfunded mandate may very well be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Raising the minimum wage without the funding to support it will cost Racker Centers over \$2 million, each year. In simple terms – if the Governor does not fund the proposed wage increase, Franziska Racker Centers will be forced to close. If we are forced to close, 3,000 people and their families will be without needed services and supports. And 850 staff will be without jobs. What happens to New York's pledge to care for people with disabilities? The pledge gets broken.

I wish you could meet some of our dedicated staff. For them, the job of providing direct care for people with disabilities is a calling. The work they do day in and day out is difficult, challenging and rewarding. I agree! They should be paid more! But our funding to provide these services comes from the state. The state made a pledge to make these services available. The state needs to ensure that we have the funding so these critical programs can continue. If the minimum wage is increased without the funding, we would have no choice but to close our doors.

It is now more critical than ever for all of our voices to be heard. Here at Franziska Racker Centers we have staff and families traveling to Albany to meet with our state representatives, asking them to advocate for us as the Governor puts together his final budget. I have been attending legislative forums locally and in Albany, meeting with other executive directors around the state, trying to figure out how we ensure that we are supported in our efforts to provide for people with disabilities in our communities. I need your help.

CALL GOVERNOR CUOMO AT (518) 474- 1041 AND PRESS 3 TO SPEAK TO HIS ASSISTANT AND SAY:



Governor Cuomo MUST fund his \$15.00 minimum wage proposal. This funding is critical to the health, safety, and well-being of people with developmental disabilities. To raise the wage and not fund it will leave the most vulnerable New Yorkers without the services they need. Tell the Governor to keep his promise!

Thank you for your help. If you would like to get more involved join our Listserve on our website: rackercenters.org, or send an email to Perri LoPinto at: perri@rackercenters.org. And thanks again for your continued support of Franziska Racker Centers and the work we do to make our community a welcoming and caring place to live. We can't do it without you.

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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

NATALIE M. FRENCH

Natalie is an attorney with Harris Beach PLLC, practicing in the areas of corporate and commercial real estate law. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Villanova University and Syracuse University College of Law. Natalie served as an Associate Director of the Racker Centers in 2015, serving on the Community Relations and Development Committee. Natalie is a native Ithacan, and currently lives in Ithaca with her husband Brandon and their golden retriever, Gus.



AMY THOMAS

Amy is a life-long resident of Cortland N.Y. She has been a Registered Nurse for 35 years after receiving her Associates Degree in Nursing at Tompkins Cortland Community College and her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Syracuse University. Over her nursing career she has worked as a staff nurse, college health nurse, nursing supervisor, nursing manager, and is currently working as the Director of the Urgent Care Centers at Cayuga Medical Center. Amy is a current board member for Gadabout and is involved with the American cancer Society Community and Coaches vs Cancer committee. Amy resides in Cortland with her husband Gary Thomas.



KAY WOOD

Kay is a life-long resident of Cortland County graduating from Cortland High and working for a number of years as a secretary at Pall Trinity and SUNY Cortland. After the birth of her son, Kay furthered her education at TC3 and became a Registered Nurse, initially working with traumatic brain injury patients and eventually working for many years at the JM Murray Center serving individuals with intellectual/developmental needs.

While Kay retired in 2009, she just completed her second term on the Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee for Cortland County and has been a member of Cortland's Family Support Services for over ten years during which time she has been involved in the RFP screening process.

Kay is a member of the leadership board at her church and their Relay for Life group. She has held past positons as a Christian education teacher and founder of a church group for adults with disabilities.

Kay resides in Homer with her adult son, Joseph, who is diagnosed with epilepsy. Kay enjoys spending time with family including her son, two daughters and three grandchildren. She also enjoys spending time gardening and traveling.



"DECODING THE AUTISTIC BRAIN" CONTINUED FROM COVER

Kim Barthel has traveled the world to share her knowledge with various community organizations and agencies. How was Franziska Racker Centers able to bring Kim to the Ithaca community? Jessica Jones, Assistant Director of Quality Enhancement, played an important role on the team that worked on this. Recently, I sat down with Jessica to discuss the Kim Barthel four day conference.

Patrick: Who is Kim Barthel? And why did Racker Centers host this event?

Jessica: Kim provides an incredible and interesting blend of neurobiology, science, attachment theory, and clinical strategies to her teaching. Several clinicians had attended her conferences and suggested that Racker Centers and the community

"Kim is a gateway to a holistic approach of looking at the children we serve, and how we as a community of families and providers understand ourselves and our interactions of others," Kellie Hummel, Racker Centers' Physical Therapist.

"Her skills as a presenter made the long days go fast as she interspersed anecdotes, answered questions, and shared little videos while imparting such detailed information. She seemed very tuned into her audience, as I'm sure she also is with families and children," Joan Slatoff, Tompkins Community Action.

could learn a lot from her expertise. In 2014, Kim came to Ithaca for a total of five days, and provided workshops for staff across the agency, families, and the community. During these five days, Kim was also the keynote speaker at Racker Centers' fall celebration and taught a three-day neuro developmental therapy course. Her presence was overwhelmingly positive. People who attended her conference felt that her experience intersected with every program throughout the agency, and blended fully with the agency's mission, vision, and values. We became aware and interested in her 4-day course, Decoding Autism, and began discussions on bringing Kim back in 2015. The target audience for this course could be much broader, and reach far more people. During her first visit, we didn't know how easily accessible and relevant her information was to others.

Patrick: How does this event help support the Racker Centers' mission & vision?

Jessica: Our agency is a learning organization. We aim to help people live fulfilling lives in an interdependent culture. We need to continue to strive to provide collaborative learning to families and the community; learning together connects people and builds relationships. Change is transformative; the power of learning and practicing is dynamic. As learning becomes more personalized, it connects organizations with families and builds community.

Patrick: What else can you add about this event?

Jessica: The information that was shared was easily digestible. Kim talked about living fully and well, and not specifically through the lens of autism. We learned that we can help people live better by creating opportunities for people to build connections, be more self-aware, and explore the beauty of differences. We need to celebrate life experiences in the most mindful way.

Kim Barthel

Patrick: What did you hope participants got out of this event?

Jessica: A real appreciation of integrated learning that is centers and community based, and extends across many disciplines. Integrated learning creates a shared platform that is respectful and allows each participant to bring their own learning perspective and experience. This will help support people and families in exciting new ways. There is a power when you are learning alongside

"I appreciated learning more about the way the brain functions for kids with autism, trauma, attachment issues, and the things I can bring into my work with kids that are informed by this knowledge of the brain," Hannah McConnell, Turning Point Program.

"Kim presents state-of-the-art information, gathering research from all around the world and sharing it in an active, engaging presentation. Once you have experienced Kim you become family. Franziska Racker Centers is also warm and welcoming, and an excellent venue to highlight this opportunity," Jane Murray, Speech Pathologist Supervisor, Cerebral Palsy of Rochester.



Kim Barthel

STAFF RECEIVES COUNCIL ON QUALITY LEADERSHIP APPROVAL

The Council on Quality Leadership (CQL) has created a process to measure the presence or absence of personal outcomes for people with disabilities. The Personal Outcomes or POMs are measured using a structured interview process. POMs measure two things: outcomes which is based on the person's quality of life, and supports. Supports are the responsibility of the organization and are the direct efforts provided to the person to achieve their outcomes. CQL has a credentialing process certifying that an organization is using best practices in supporting people with disabilities and has a commitment to continuous improvement.

Congratulations to Racker Centers' staff, Jessica Jones, Assistant Director of Quality Enhancement, and Kristen Heichel, Opportunity Development Facilitator-Residential Program, who

have both recently passed the interrater reliability testing, and are now CQL approved trainers of the interview process. Through a multi-week training, interview and presentation process, both Jessica and Kristen are now able to train interviewers across the agency. Interviewers will help implement CQL standards by conducting interviews with those we serve prior to their ISPs (Individual Support Plans) so that their POMs outcomes will inform that individual's person centered support plan. Additionally, Racker Centers will begin to measure the quality of our services by determining how effective our supports are in helping people achieve a greater quality of life. CQL has a nationwide database of which Racker Centers will now be able to utilize to benchmark services and better understand how we compare to national averages.



Jessica Jones (left) and Kristen Heichel

STAFF MEMBER BECOMES CERTIFIED TRAINER IN BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY



Jennifer Aneshansley

In the spring of 2015, Franziska Racker Centers was fortunate to receive a grant from the Howland Foundation as administered by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County which supported an employee becoming a certified trainer in Bridges Out of Poverty.

Last fall, Jennifer Aneshansley, Home Service Director at Franziska Racker Centers, participated in an intensive, three-day training session in Indianapolis, IN with the organization Aha! Process, Inc. At the training, there were participants from across the country with backgrounds in social services, religious organizations, law enforcement, and education. It was an enthusiastic group that came out of the experience excited and optimistic about bringing the Bridges Out of Poverty training back to their respective communities.

The training has touched the lives of tens of thousands of individuals throughout the world. The intent of the training is to prevent, reduce, and alleviate poverty by providing insight, education and concrete tools. Having a Bridges Out of Poverty certified trainer at Racker Centers will be an invaluable asset for Racker staff and the community at large. Racker Centers is looking forward to presenting the first of many Bridges Out of Poverty training sessions for human service professionals in Ithaca, NY this spring. Look for more details in the coming weeks.



Mary Beth is a young woman who has grown up with developmental disabilities. In 2000 she moved into a residential home operated by Racker Centers and lived there for a number of years. While living at High Gate, Mary Beth started painting as a way to relax. In 2014 Mary Beth moved into her own apartment and through this transition, still worked on her painting and artwork. Once in her apartment, she found herself surrounded by her drawings with a desire to share them with other people. Last fall, with support from her Racker Centers' Community Support Professional (CSP) Nkechi Ebube, Mary Beth began the pursuit of achieving her dream of exhibiting her paintings in one of Ithaca's Gallery Night Locations. Her CSP, Nkechi, was astounded by her artwork and worked to support Mary Beth's dream to showcase her art in the community by looking for venues that would exhibit her art. Nkechi took Mary Beth to Buffalo Street Bookstore to speak with the manager several times during the month of September and approach him about a possible art show. She encouraged Mary Beth to express all of her concerns regarding whether she could sell the paintings, and to ask questions regarding what materials were needed to prepare for the art exhibit. In the months leading up to the exhibit, Mary Beth chose the paintings she was most fond of and, with the help of Nkechi, created the brand name of "MB" to publicize the show.

Opening night was quickly approaching and Mary Beth could not help but repeat how incredulous it was that she was now identified as a featured local artist with her own art exhibit. Racker staff Laura Coletta and Kelly McKee, along with Nkechi, helped Mary Beth set up her show and hang her painting. On her big night, an exciting number of people attended. The art exhibit was composed of an eclectic and vibrant community and Mary Beth was at the center of it. Nkechi would prompt Mary Beth at the beginning to speak about her art and the story behind it to the many attendees from the community. Shortly after, Mary Beth started approaching and engaging in conversations with people looking at her paintings. Mary Beth sold more than 10 paintings that night; 2 of them within the first 10 minutes! All in all, the night was a complete success. February 5th, 2016 was the night Mary Beth presented herself and her work to the whole Ithaca community.



New local artist MB (Mary Beth) at her art show opening held at Buffalo Street Books.



Community members browse paintings during 1st Friday Gallery night during MB's art show.



Does the work of a Community Support Professional sound like a fulfilling career?

Racker Centers has many openings offering flexible schedules on both a part and full-time basis in the field of Community Support Professional, Direct Support Professional and many others. Please contact Jeanette Martin, Director of Recruitment or check out the open positions at www.rackercenters.org/employment to learn more.

"Decoding the Autistic Brian", continued from page 4...

"This conference reinforced for me one of the basic tenets of OT (or any therapy) that I learned 30 years ago in school--the therapeutic use of self as the most essential modality needed for change in our clients. She discusses relationships as the key factor in helping our clients make meaningful progress, though of course other work is also necessary," **Nancy Quarrier, Occupational Therapist, Ithaca City School District.**

Patrick: How can those who missed this event access materials and content?

Jessica: We videotaped this event with the intention of editing it and making it available for future learning through Racker Centers' Autism Lending Library. You can also view Kim's website: <http://kimbarthel.ca/>.

Patrick: What are some additional trainings Racker Centers will be offering in the future?

Jessica:

- "Building Bridges out of Poverty" – see article on page 5
- Supporting Individuals through valued attachments (SIVA)—this training will take place within our partner program with TST BOCES and will train both our staff and BOCES staff that work to support children's mental health.
- Don Castaldi, Psy.D., - Co-Founder of the SIVA training will lead the local training in which the final three days will incorporate a train-the-trainer component so that Racker and BOCES staff can share their knowledge with other colleagues after the training is complete.

MAKING IT HAPPEN



Pictured above (from left to right): Heather Hughes, Director of Community Relations & Development – Racker Centers, Cecilia Campbell, Director of Finance – Racker Centers, Dana Barnes, Account Manager – Enterprise Fleet Management, and Ashley Hellinger, Senior Account Manager –Enterprise Fleet Coordinator.

Thank You **ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS FOUNDATION** for your generous donation of \$2,000 to fund a wheelchair scale for our residential program allowing residents that are medically frail to monitor weight, impacting important medication needs.

THANK YOU TO THOSE PARTNERS WHO HELPED MAKE THE KIMBERLY BARTHEL TRAINING "DECODING THE AUTISTIC BRAIN" POSSIBLE



Thank you to ITHACA COLLEGE Health Science & Human Performance for supporting faculty and staff attendance

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS VISIT www.rackercenters.org



SPRING 2016

OUTLOOK

www.rackercenters.org


Franziska Racker Centers
3226 Wilkins Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

MISSION STATEMENT

We support people with disabilities and their families to lead fulfilling lives by providing opportunities to learn and be connected with others.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a world where all people know they belong.



SAVE THE DATE for our Community Celebrations!

Tioga Community Celebration - May 12, 2016 at
Owego Treadway Inn

Cortland Community Celebration - date TBD

Tompkins Community Celebration - October 11,
2016 at Ithaca College, Emerson Suites

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