

OUTLOOK



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Finding Hope in Challenging Times

By Roger Sibley, Executive Director

The old Chinese curse "may you live in interesting times" feels very real for many of us. In this Age of Uncertainty many things are changing, and assumptions about the future are being shaken.

There are too many things happening in too many places around the world. How do we try to make sense of it all?

As some of you may know, in my youth I studied history. Now I am history. Several people have had theories about how history works, one that I have always found intriguing came from Georg Hegel. His idea is that time progresses

in three stages. Hegel's Dialectic calls the current state of things the Thesis. That works until it does not, and then comes a counterforce he called the Antithesis. This period is very disruptive until it works out into a Synthesis. This becomes the new Thesis ... until things change again.



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So history does not repeat, but Hegel saw an interactive pattern that I think applies to today. There is now a great struggle between the way it used to be and the contrary, the battle of the Thesis and the Antithesis. We should understand that none of this is about good and bad. For awhile, World War II was the Thesis, and the Antithesis, peace, was very much welcome.

The American Dream

This goes back to colonial days when people left Europe to make better lives in the land of opportunity. If you work hard, you can get ahead. Grow up to be President.

A young woman named Noreen Malone wrote an article in The New Yorker Magazine, "Coming of age in post-hope America." A lot of young people, who went to college, got degrees and loans, cannot find work that does not involve saying "do you want fries with that?" The protests on Wall Street have a similar theme, I did all the right stuff and I'm getting hurt.

The perception is partially true, but the American Dream was never for everyone. While immigrants came from Europe in the 19th century to find fame and fortune, people from China came to find discrimination. As did the Irish and Hispanics. And people came from Africa involuntarily to spend a lifetime working for someone else.

The Age of Human Services

This is a name of my own invention. Over the past three or four decades, more and more money has been spent on helping people. A lot of this is entitlements, Social Security under FDR, which was passed partly to get the old guys out of the workforce so young people could get jobs during the depression. Lyndon Johnson got Medicare and Medicaid programs passed as part of the war on poverty, to help folks with little money get health care.

A lot of the increased spending is because we are a compassionate people, so folks would start programs and create agencies to help people with particular problems.

The problem with human services is human service program models that are carefully crafted to help people and

capture some sort of funding or another. The plus is that more help is available to people. But there is a downside.

Over the past few decades, we have seen a decline in social connections. People tend to not know their neighbors, and may choose to not reach out to a neighbor in distress because there is an organization that will help them. Whether these two things, the growth of human services and social isolation, are causal or coincidence, I cannot say. But the result is that more and more people have become dependent on a wide range of human services for a wide range of issues.

HOPE IS NOT A PASSIVE THING, WHERE WE CROSS OUR FINGERS AND WAIT TO SEE HOW THINGS TURN OUT.

The age of human services is now experiencing the antithesis. Government spending is being cut for a lot of things that have been funded for years. Charitable giving is strong, but has never been able to keep up with the demand for more money for more services and more not-for-profits. A hole is opening.

Synthesis

So if we believe Hegel, our society is leaving the old way and heading somewhere. And if we believe Hegel, we need to understand that business as usual is over, it will not go back to the way it was. There will be less money for human services. At the same time, we cannot allow anyone truly in need to be abandoned. And that new thing, the synthesis, is not pre-determined.

And that is where the hope comes in. Hope is not a passive thing, where we cross our fingers and wait to see how things turn out. The new paradigm is something we can shape, something we can create if we are willing to think and work together.

Hope

The first thought comes from the philosopher king of the Nixon administration, John Erlichman. He said "you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube." Erlichman obviously

knew his Hegel. There is no way we are going back to institutionalized care for people with disabilities or throwing the kids with disabilities out of school. The future can be good, but in new and different ways.

Another is something we at Franziska Racker Centers have been talking about for quite awhile – Making Room. We believe that the community's need for specialized knowledge will grow even if funding for specialized programs does not grow apace. The "big idea," the Learning Center, is an organized way to collect knowledge, innovate, and share.

Human services is a dynamic field. We are understanding more about human development, physical, cognitive, and emotional. With better understanding comes better ways to help people with significant needs. These are mostly developed by practitioners, such as us.

The tightening of spending is coming at the same time as the increase in the complexity and intensity of needs. The number of children with emotional and behavioral problems and the number of kids identified as being on the autism spectrum continues to grow. In addition to being a direct provider of services and supports, our role is and will always be to support other organizations, other systems, to help them be successful in including people with significant disabilities. Our partnership with preschools, public schools, and many others must be and will be strengthened.

Inclusion is good for our Mission and good for a future with restricted resources.

Getting to the future will be hard, as all transitions are. Hope does not just happen. It is up to each of us, individually and collectively, to make it a future to enjoy.

This article is an excerpt from Roger's keynote address at the Centers' Fall Celebration.

FALL CELEBRATION

A CROWD OF NEARLY 200 SUPPORTERS GATHERED FOR FRANZISKA RACKER CENTERS' FALL CELEBRATION ON NOVEMBER 4TH AT CELEBRATIONS BANQUET HALL IN ITHACA, NY. THE EVENT IS HELD ANNUALLY TO HONOR BOTH STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO AND SUPPORT OF THE CENTERS' MISSION OF CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION IN OUR COMMUNITY. Board President Phyllis Joyce opened the event with a recap of the year that started with the relocation of classrooms and offices from Wilkins Road to sites around the community to 'make room' for the construction to take place. This was followed shortly thereafter by storms and flooding that caused significant damage to homes and businesses in Tioga County. She commended staff for their prompt actions saying, "Our preschool staff, service coordinators and community support staff hit the ground running. They listened, comforted and responded. In the midst of the all the wreckage, people came together to help each other." An update was given by Associate Executive Director Dan Brown on the "Making Room" construction (see page 9 for photos) and awards were presented to four staff and one community member (see inset). Roger Sibley, Executive Director, delivered the keynote address (see cover story) that encouraged those present to always remember how far the fight for inclusion has come and never forget that there is always work to be done. "Hope is not idle," he concluded, "Hope is real."

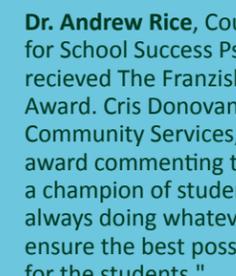


Volunteers from the residential program attended the Fall Celebration to help out as greeters. Pictured above (left to right) from Campbell Avenue are: Annie, Jimmy, Tessa, Steven and Erik.

2011 AWARD WINNERS



The Special Friend Award was presented to **Jim Johnston**, the President and CEO of Family and Children's Service of Ithaca. He accepted the award saying, "We are truly fortunate to all be a part of this generous community that continues to support important things. I'm honored to be recognized and have all of you as friends."



Dr. Andrew Rice, Counseling for School Success Psychologist, received the Franziska Racker Award. Cris Donovan, Director of Community Services, presented the award commenting that, "Dr. Rice is a champion of students and families always doing whatever necessary to ensure the best possible outcomes for the students."



Marcia Vann, Senior Team Director, received the Inspiration Award. Director of Residential Services, Pat Montanez, presented the award to Marcia for, "inspiring us to be thoughtful, to be thorough, to be team players, to stay connected, and to be enthusiastic about our jobs. You have remained enthusiastic for 19 years and we thank you."



Brandon Graves, Teacher Aide at Wilkins Road, received the Inspiration Award for his upbeat and positive personality with kids. Jody Scriber, Director of Educational and Clinic Services, described Brandon as "inspiring to the staff around him" and "someone that will do whatever it takes to make the lives of children better."



Sally Manning, Counseling for School Success Program Director, was recognized for her 25 years of service to Franziska Racker Centers.

THIRD THURSDAYS

Beginning in January 2011, and continuing each month since, Racker Centers has hosted activities on the third Thursday of every month. The events are planned by staff from the Community Support Services Department in Tompkins County, which includes staff from the Service Coordination and the Family Resource Programs. "Third Thursdays" grew out of an identified need to provide a regular opportunity for families to come together, meet one another, build relationships, and have fun.

Since its inception, Third Thursdays have hosted The Magic Paintbrush Project, live animals from Cayuga Nature Center, "Drama Night" with costumes borrowed from the Kitchen Theatre, and always, a shared meal. There are numerous activities each month for individuals of all ages to participate in. Craft projects and face painting have been some favorites; however, Nick, who has attended several events states, "Animals from the Cayuga Nature Center was one of my favorite activities. Third Thursdays is a nice way to meet people."



Making caramel apples at Cayuga Nature Center during October's Third Thursdays event.

Emily, an Ithaca High School student who just relocated from Southern California, attended the Third Thursday event at Myers Park in August. She states, "Jennifer Aneshansley, Home Service Director at Racker Centers, visited my family at our home when we moved here. She told us about the event and I was interested in coming in order to meet some people." At the picnic Emily sat with three other teenagers discussing college, their classes, and their plans for the new school year, while the younger attendees played together on the nearby playground. The wide variety of ages represented each month has been a definite benefit of Third Thursdays since family members of all ages feel welcome.

The response to Third Thursdays has been outstanding; anywhere from 40-50 people attend nearly every month. Families spend time talking, sharing ideas and getting to know each other in a very relaxed atmosphere. Children spend time with their friends and meet new people while enjoying fun

activities. Liz and her husband Mark have attended a number of the Third Thursday events. "When we moved here we didn't know anyone in the special needs community," says Liz. "This is just an awesome way to get to meet people, network, get to know specialists in the area, and find out where people go for doctors," she concludes. An instant later her eldest son Nathan announced a classmate of his had arrived. Liz explains, "My son Nathan - who does not have special needs - just met a friend from his class at school here. I just think that's great, it's important for Nathan to see that all of us are part of one community." Liz and Mark's youngest son, Ryan, receives Community Support Services from Racker Centers.

Since building construction for the "Making Room" Capital Campaign began in the spring, Third Thursdays has been taken out into the community rather than held at the Wilkins Road campus. "Community partners have come together to help us host these events and offer great activities while we aren't able to be in our own building," states Cris Donovan, Director of Community Support Services. "By moving the programs around the county, families were able to take part in our planned activities, as well as explore the different resources at each location. And, because the meal at these events is also an important component, we would really like to thank Wegmans for stepping forward and sponsoring the food for two of our monthly events. These evenings are an important, but unfunded, part of our mission to help build a welcoming, supportive community where people with disabilities are connected and celebrated. Any help we receive helps us to continue with them."

WHAT'S NEXT ON THIRD THURSDAYS?

- The Magic Paintbrush Project will return in December 2011!
- Beginning in January 2012, Cornell Cooperative Extension and their 4-H program will host a series of Third Thursday events at their location on Willow Avenue in Ithaca including a hands-on activity for families such as: Lego night, cooking lessons in the newly renovated cooking kitchen, or a plant science project.

For more information contact Cris Donovan (x277) or Mel London (x317) at 882-9520.



Brandon works on a bracelet for his mom during a Third Thursdays event.

BRAIN GYM® INTRODUCED TO STAFF

At first glance, the activities involved in Brain Gym® remind you of some of the basic elements of well-known health and wellness activities. Introduced to staff members by Franziska Racker Centers' Behavioral Specialist Sheila Foote, The Brain Gym® training includes the demonstration of agile movements as done in yoga, diaphragm breathing techniques, the use of pressure points, and stresses healthy nutrition through simple steps such as drinking plenty of water. Brain Gym® International is a registered trademark of the education Kinesiology Foundation in Ventura, California. Trainings focus on the commitment to the principal that "moving with intention leads to optimal learning."

Sheila attended a training herself in May 2010 and shared the training with her peers. Brain Gym® movements, exercises, or activities revolve around the original 26 Brain Gym movements. According to Brain Gym® international, these activities recall the movements naturally done during the first years of life when learning to coordinate the eyes, ears, hands and

whole body. Practicing the movements has said to bring extensive improvement in areas such as concentration and focus, memory, academics, physical coordination, relationships, and more.

In the training that Sheila led, the session started out with a story. Cora, who is 9 years old, has received day services as well as waiver respite through Racker Centers. Although Cora has some fine motor issues, she has had a lot of success with the Brain Gym® exercises and the gross motor skills used in these exercises. Cora kicked off the training by performing "A Princess Story." While reading the story, Cora demonstrated some of the Brain Gym® movements, and stopped to include other fundamental components such as the importance of sipping water throughout the day.

As Sheila continues the training, she discusses the idea that Brain Gym® is also based on the principle that play is the way children learn. While at play, children experience movement, exploration, problem solving, and



Cora demonstrates the importance of drinking water throughout the day.

integration of reflexes. Play is multi-sensory, it stimulates the heart, lungs and brain, it enhances muscle growth, and it helps social interaction. Brain Gym® exercises have proven helpful for children who struggle with hypersensitivity. The movements promote gaining balance and can help individuals boost their energy, calm anxieties and lessen stress.

SPCA MARCH FOR THE ANIMALS INCLUDES SPECIAL GUESTS



"It's all about the smiles: the smiles on the attendees faces last year were amazing," said Thomas. SPCA Executive Director Jim Bouderau commented, "It means so much to us that every member of our community can join us in our biggest event. We all share a passion for animals, and Racker Centers' participants contribute such energy to the group!" With a smile of her own, Thomas expressed excitement for next year's event and for a continued relationship with the Centers saying, "We are thrilled that Racker Centers was part of the supporters that helped to raise over \$70,000 for our shelter. Can't wait to march with them next year!"

-By Julia Catalano, Ithaca College Student Interning at the SPCA

Pictured: Front Row, left to right: Lisa Carl, Jaime Canfield, Michael Stevens, Jason Thomas, Jennifer Thomas, James Searfoss. Back Rows, left to right: Alyson Stevens (staff), Robin Speary (staff), Patricia Bassett, Kevin Stevens (staff), Liye Hoshio, Paula Marshall (staff), Ruth Searfoss, Jane Sehir-loiaco (staff), Kate Hughes (staff), Audrey Budney, Jesse Garrow, Brad Kelsey (staff), and Emily Whyte (staff).

RACKER STAFF HONORED BY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

Franziska Racker Centers' staff members Jaydn McCune and Tommy Miller were both recognized at the Mental Health Association of Tompkins County's 57th Annual Meeting on September 26th. Jaydn, Lighthouse and Possibilities Program Director, received the Ann Birnbach Outstanding Mental Health Professional Award. This award honors a mental health professional whose work has been distinguished by its quality, length of service, and commitment to the profession. The award is named for Ann Birnbach, MSW, a social worker and therapist who gave many hours pro bono and who personified the highest ethical standards in her field. Tommy, Family Resolution Facilitator, was honored with the Jane Y. Hartz Human Service Worker award. Jane Cullings Hartz was secretary to Gertude Shepard, the first Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of Tompkins County. Later Jane became an Executive Director in her own right. This award is given to honor a front line worker or paraprofessional whose dedicated efforts make a real and measurable difference in the everyday health and well-being of the people served.



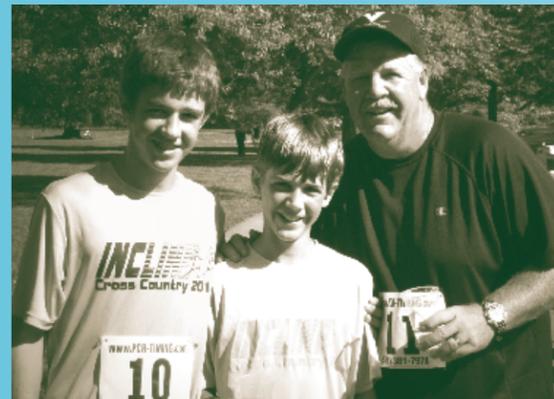
Tommy Miller and Jaydn McCune

RACKER WELLNESS COMMITTEE HOSTS 5K FOR STAFF



RACKER CENTERS' WELLNESS COMMITTEE HELD THE FIRST CENTERS' STAFF 5K RUN/WALK ON OCTOBER 9, 2011. STAFF AND FAMILIES ENJOYED A WARM AND SUNNY DAY FOR THIS FIRST TIME EVENT. RUNNERS AND WALKERS ALIKE SPENT THE AFTERNOON ENJOYING EACH OTHER'S COMPANY BY PARTICIPATING IN A FUN AND HEALTHY ACTIVITY TOGETHER.

Pictured: (left) Chase, Peter and Tim Davis; (top left) Katrina Deforest and Spencer Jones, (above) Participants at the start of the race



JIM JOHNSTON HONORED

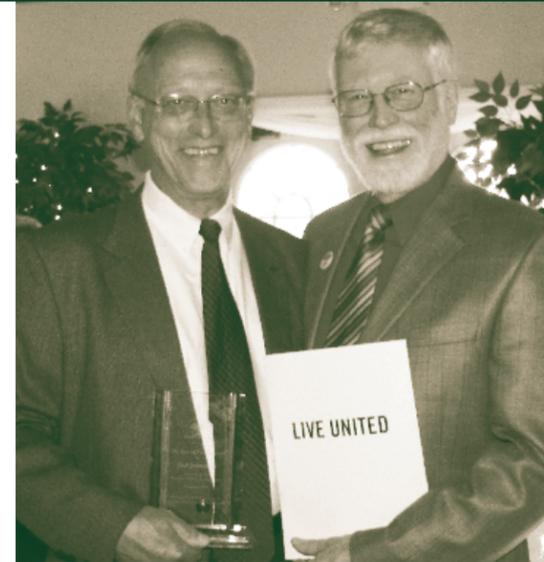
Describing Jim Johnston as humble is a vast understatement for a man that has spent nearly 40 years advocating for children. Planning to retire from his role as President and Chief Executive Officer of Family & Children's Service of Ithaca at the end of the year, Jim's response when asked about his greatest achievement revolves not around himself, but those he has worked with. "It's not about me," he says. "I just played my role. What this is really about is ALL of us and the extraordinary staff that I have had the pleasure to work with."

Jim was recently honored with The Special Friend Award at Franziska Racker Centers' Fall Celebration. This award, which recognizes an individual's support, service and devotion to Racker Centers and its ideals, was co-presented to Jim by long-time friends Executive Director Roger Sibley and President of Challenge, Patrick McKee.

Patrick recognized Jim for both his work in our community and his volunteer

activities including serving disaster victims after Hurricane Katrina saying, "What I really enjoy about Jim during these activities is that he doesn't self-promote," said Patrick. "I take him at his word that he is not retiring but rather stepping down and that he will remain committed to this community." Roger followed Patrick saying, "Jim is a special friend not only for Family & Children's and Racker but to the entire community. He has always been a great friend and mentor for me. He is a pure advocate for putting people first and for him this has not been a cliché but a reality of his life and very inspiring. Jim has not only been someone that does good, but a catalyst for others doing good," Roger concluded.

Indeed his leadership at Family & Children's Service has not only touched the lives of thousands and thousands of people, but has incubated a lot of other services like hospice, suicide prevention, group homes and information referral. Jim will leave his current role knowing that during his time at Family & Children's Service he was part of helping



Jim Johnston and Rober Sibley at the Center's Fall Celebration.

to add, change and grow programs to serve the community in the best way possible.

The Centers wishes Jim much luck on this next chapter and thanks him and Family and Children's Service for the partnership and special friendship over the years.

EMERTIUS DIRECTOR AND LONG-TIME FRIEND OF THE CENTERS HONORED



Steve Gironda (left) and Gene Mills (right) pose with Dave Dunlop at the Wrestling Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony in September in Lawrenceville, NJ.

Dave Dunlop, a long-time friend and supporter of the Centers, was recently presented with the Outstanding American award by the New Jersey Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Dave was nominated for the award based on his commitment to the betterment of the youth of America through wrestling. Dave joins other Outstanding Americans whose names are recorded at the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in Stillwater Oklahoma. In 1991, Dave was recognized for his football and wrestling careers by the Cornell Athletic Hall of Fame. Dave's inspirational leadership extends beyond the wrestling mat to include his amazing career with Cornell as a fundraiser and his volunteer work.

Dave has been a devoted supporter of Racker Centers since he was first invited to learn more about the agency in the late 1970's by a friend that worked part-time for what was then The Special Children's Center. "I consider that introduction to be a very lucky day for me," Dave recalls. Board Member Skip Landon asked Dave to join the Board of The Special Children's Center, Dave readily accepted. "Someone advised me once that worthwhile people doing worthwhile things are something to look for," said Dave, "and I found that with The Special Children's Center." Now, 40 years later, Dave is still an active volunteer with the Centers and currently is a co-chair of the Centers' "Making Room" Capital Campaign. His warm and engaging personality, expertise in fundraising, and his commitment to the mission and vision of the agency, has been an invaluable asset to the productivity and success of the Centers. Congratulations, Dave, on your recent honor and thank you for sharing your talents with the Centers.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Phyllis, Catharine and Annie Joyce

Franziska Racker Centers kicked off the "Making Room" Capital Campaign publicly in November of 2010, and thanks to the generosity of the community, \$2.8 million of the \$3.5 million goal has been raised. Construction is in full swing and the final fundraising efforts are under way as the staff, administrators and families look eagerly ahead to the reopening of the preschool building in July 2012. Many have stepped forward with their support - from businesses within the community, to families whose loved ones have received services from the Centers over the years. What motivates people to give to the Centers? What moves them to help the agency reach their campaign goals of renovating the aging preschool, expanding space for our community-based programs, and creating a Learning Center?

Phyllis Joyce, the President of the Board of Directors, became associated with the agency in 1993 when she and her husband, Lanny, welcomed their daughter Annie into

their family. Three weeks after Annie's birth they were referred to what was then The Special Children's Center for an evaluation. "Eighteen years ago when Annie was born with Down syndrome, we really needed some support and encouragement," says Phyllis. "Our involvement with the Centers now allows us to be on the giving end rather than the receiving end when it comes to support and encouragement." There is no question that being involved with Racker Centers has been an enriching and life changing experience for Annie. Now 18, Annie was able to grow friendships from a young age through Racker's Friendship Network and the Family Partnership and Respite programs. "Not only have these experiences helped to shape Annie's life," comments Phyllis, "but they've shaped our family as well."

Catharine Morgan Joyce, Phyllis' mother-in-law, is a long-time donor to the Centers. After watching her granddaughter benefit from the programs and services over the years, she feels that if you are unsure about whether the Racker Centers is the place you want to give a donation then you should visit. "It is amazing how many different areas we are involved in and one only needs to see and hear all of the great things that are being done every day," Catharine explains. "Once you learn about the Centers and see it in action, you will wonder why you are NOT giving a donation."

The Joyce family is a strong advocate for the "Making Room" Campaign. "My greatest hope is that we will be able to make our Learning Center a place where the community can come to learn and share."

To show your support for the "Making Room" Capital Campaign visit www.rackercenters.org.

Phyllis Joyce on "Creating A Culture of Inclusion"

"Sometimes people have to be forced to see that we are all the same, wanting the same things for our loved ones - a place to belong, friends, meaningful employment, food and safe shelter. One of the ways this happens is for folks to get to know each other, to have a one-on-one relationship with someone they may not otherwise get to know. In our family, we have forged such wonderful friendships out in the community because of the programs and the people at Racker Centers who have supported us these past 18 years. People tend to surround themselves with others like them and often don't venture out of their safe circle. Once you start interacting and working and playing with people who, for instance, may have an intellectual disability, actually it may happen the first time you laugh together, you start looking at the world a little differently and actually find that the world is a way more interesting place to be when everyone is not the same. The only way to create a culture of inclusion is to walk the walk that you talk. The Racker Centers tries to do just that."

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Brick is going up on the classroom addition to match the existing exterior.



Walls of the small learning center are in the works.



New Partnership Classroom with a completed roof.



Binder coat application on the new parking lot.



New water detention pond on the east side of the preschool.



New roof on the north end of the preschool is completed.

FATHERS' CONNECTION

From July 7-9, 2011, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the National Conference on the Childhood Apraxia of Speech with the help of Racker Centers where my son has been receiving services. . Before attending the conference, I knew very little of my son's speech disorder and I had no idea what to expect. I was amazed at the end of the weekend how much information there was on this disorder, how widespread Apraxia of Speech is and how much I learned. In my eyes, this conference was the equivalent to many football clinics I've attended. At those clinics I had the opportunity to listen to some of the best coaches the game had to offer. This particular weekend in San Diego I was able to listen to some of the best speech pathologists in the country talking specifically about my son's condition.

I took full advantage of everything the conference had to offer. I attended every session I possibly could. Inbetween sessions I searched out a few of the speakers and asked them very specific questions regarding my little guy. Each and every person I spoke with was very accommodating of their time and offered unbelievable insight. I was very fortunate to engage in conversations with families and speech pathologists from all over the country such as Texas, California, Oregon and Washington. We shared our stories and insights to our child's speech disorder. One thing I learned from all of those conversations is that my family is extremely fortunate to live in a supportive community that provides many of the necessary services in assisting our son.

One particular family whom I met at the conference, which stood out, is Jeff Rainess and his family from New Jersey. Jeff is a high school football coach and like me, just a regular guy. He stood up and shared his family's emotional and inspirational story. He spoke for approximately thirty minutes as he shared the commitment and sacrifices his family has made in the pursuit of treating their son. Jeff was passionate in delivering his speech. This was the best

session of the weekend for me because Jeff was talking my language.....I felt like he was speaking to me. He wasn't using

JEFF IS A HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH AND LIKE ME, JUST A REGULAR GUY.

four and five syllable words (that some of the specialists use) in describing his son's condition and treatment. He was a 'real' person, from a 'real' family, sharing a 'real' story. At one point Jeff's son stood next to him and said a few

words that a couple of years ago would have been very difficult to accomplish. Jeff and I have maintained contact since the conference and I am hopeful that our families will re-connect at the 2012 conference in Boston, MA.



For more information on Childhood Apraxia of Speech, visit the website of the Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America (CASANA) at www.apraxia-kids.org

More On Thomas and Jeff....

THOMAS MURPHY

Thomas and Judy Murphy noticed that their son, Thomas, was not reaching milestones in the same manner as his older sisters had when Thomas was about one year old. They remember all of the comments that people would say, "he's a boy," "he'll catch up," "don't compare siblings." However, they had no question in their minds that Thomas was delayed. His speech was the most noticeable. Thomas and Judy began the process of searching for help. Thomas received Early Intervention services and was diagnosed with Childhood Apraxia of Speech by the age of two. It was soon after that the Murphy's discovered Racker Centers' programs. According to Thomas, "Racker Centers and the amazing staff, providers and teachers have been a God-send to us. The 'team' as we call them, is a collective advocate for our son. We work together passing suggestions and experience." He continues, "We are blessed to have the folks at Racker Centers in Thomas's life. Having all of his daily providers in one place working together is such a benefit to him and to us."

JEFF RAINESS

Dave Hammer, a noted expert on Apraxia of Speech, along with Kathy and Sharon from the Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America CASANA, approached Jeff two years ago to help with a session at the annual conference. He and his wife, Jennifer, are very proud to be associated with CASANA and honored they have been asked to speak at the last two annual conferences. They have worked very hard at finding the best approach to battle their son Jake's Apraxia, and CASANA has been a huge part of that. Jeff states, "Our son, Jake, is 7 years old now. He still goes to therapy for speech. He is a very normal little boy with a great vocabulary. His speech isn't perfect, but you can understand everything he says. He is entering the 1st grade this year and is in a typical classroom. He loves sports, the Wii and playing with his brother and sister. He came to my HS football game the other day and promptly told me afterwards that, "Daddy, your defense REALLY needs work!" He's right- and it was sure wonderful to hear him say it."



YOUNG FUNDRAISERS RAISE MONEY FOR OWEGO CLASSROOMS

This year's Porch Fest in the Fall Creek area of downtown Ithaca involved a lot of great music and some wonderful fundraising by Sam Herman and Zeke Lawrence. The boys, ages 7 and 8, were taken by the news that in the terrible flooding in Owego, Franziska Racker Centers' special education preschool classroom was severely damaged, and all the school supplies for the children ruined. The boys decided they wanted to help. So during Porch Fest they sold cider and cookies raising \$205.00! The children in Owego are very grateful for their generosity and efforts!

Sam and Zeke proudly hold-up the check they donated to the Centers to help with flood damage.

THANK YOU BUSINESS PARTNERS*

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YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

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.

To donate or for more information 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.



* Business Partners are donors who make gifts of \$1,000 or above given in support of Annual Operating costs or our "Making Room" Campaign.

WINTER 2011

OUTLOOK

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RACKER CENTERS
Creating Opportunities for People with Special Needs

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.