



# Hear Here

## Therapy & Fun a Success!



We did it! We just finished our 26th year of Therapy and Fun. It was great! Emilio could not plan a motor task at the beginning of the program, but at the final awards presentation he got up in front of everyone and juggled! The smile never left his face.

He and 27 other children received 1,893 hours of therapy over 21 mornings. They mastered 84% of their speech-language objectives, 73% of occupational therapy goals and 64% of physical therapy goals.

Both caregivers and children were thrilled at the progress made at Therapy & Fun this year.

“This summer my child has been more emotionally stable at home. He has maintained, and in some cases, advanced his skills, as opposed to regression like last summer,” commented one parent.

“Everyone at Therapy & Fun is well prepared and kind. The program was a success. My child is coming home with something new each day” said another.

This year, we had 50 volunteers and 10 staff. As one parent remarked, “I was very impressed with the volunteers and comfortable that my son was in good hands.”

Therapy & Fun remains an amazing program for the children we serve and the teen volunteers who learn how good it feels to help children.

It is through community support that we have been able to continue helping children walk, talk, learn, and play. ■

### Uncork the Fun at WineFest 2008

November 7th at Noto's Old World Italian

Party with us! Taste over 300 fine wines from across the globe paired with gourmet Italian cuisine. This premier wine and food event includes a live band, a charity auction, and a wide variety of delicious wines. The VIP Room offers premium varietals along with wine education from Joann Noto, yearly winner of the Wine Spectator's Excellence Award.

Bring friends and start your holiday season by tasting fine wines. Purchase your favorites by the bottle or the case for all your upcoming parties. Proceeds support Comprehensive Therapy Center, the Ronald McDonald House of West Michigan, the Rotary Club, and the Kent County Medical Society Alliance. For more information, e-mail the coordinator at [tsmith@therapycenter.org](mailto:tsmith@therapycenter.org).



## JOTTINGS FROM JEAN

Fall is an exciting time around Comprehensive Therapy Center! We have finished our 26th year of Therapy and Fun with the children making terrific progress as they improve their abilities to walk, talk, learn and play.

The school year always is exciting as we are able to see how much the children with whom we work grew and matured during the summer.

We are excited that this fall many families have chosen our agency for their children to receive supplementary motor and language therapies.

With the changing of the season, we have changes on our staff. We have grown to include new speech-language pathologists and special education teachers. We wish our new retirees, Bette Buffington and Maribeth Garzelloni, well.

We wish all of you a healthy and happy year.

*Jean Silbar*

## Therapy & Fun Volunteers Honored with Award

Abbey and Margo guided Sarah's hands as she used scissors to cut out her art project. Kyle jogged alongside John as he rode his specially-designed bike, encouraging him while making sure he didn't crash. Alex waited at the bathroom, helping children wash their hands before they headed to the snack room, where Anthony, Justin, and Alex handed out Crystal Light and Goldfish crackers.

Songs, crafts, and games make up the cornerstone Therapy and Fun program, and without our hardworking volunteers we would not be successful.

As a way to recognize and honor the impressive dedication of volunteers across the U.S. who freely and generously give their time for service in their community, President Bush established the Presidential Service Awards.

Volunteers encourage a sustained commitment to civic participation and inspire others to make volunteering a central part of their lives. Recipients of the award receive a letter of appreciation from the

President and a certificate. A teen volunteer needs to accumulate 50 hours to earn the Bronze Award, 75 to earn the Silver Award, and 100 hours to earn the Gold Award.

All together, 30 volunteers contributed a total of 2,068 hours over the course of Therapy & Fun. Comprehensive Therapy Center volunteers earned 12 Bronze, 10 Silver, 15 Gold, and 9 Family Presidential Service Awards. ■



## Rhythm Improves Life



When students use Bal-A-Vis-X® training, grades get better, self-esteem raises, and behavior disorders improve. Why? Bal-A-Vis-X exercises use rhythm to focus both sides of mind and body using balance, listening (auditory) and vision. Students toss beanbags and bounce small rubber balls in many different patterns of difficulty, while sitting, standing, or balancing on a rocker board. After just a few sessions, students develop their visual tracking skills and perception, helping them to pay attention to detail. Bal-A-Vis-X also helps develop eye-hand coordination and improves self-esteem. The auditory feedback helps listening to sounds, following directions and talking with others. These improvements help many different kinds of students learn better, but Bal-A-Vis-X also helps the elderly. Teaching mind and body to work together allows better functioning in all areas of life. Call us if you are interested in this kind of therapy. ■

### OUR MISSION

Comprehensive Therapy Center, Inc. serves special needs populations with effective therapeutic and advisory programs.

We are a non-profit agency helping children with disabilities walk, talk, learn, and play.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE CHILD AT A TIME



**Top:** Susan helps a young child master gross motor skills. **Bottom:** Susan helps Rachel ride a bike.

Volunteer therapy aide Susan McManus' motivations are simple. She loves working with kids, and she feels it's her mission in life to help people. While this may seem like a lofty vision for a freshman at Forest Hills Eastern High School, this motivation has prompted her to devote 76 hours to volunteering for Therapy and Fun.

"I like being here around the kids. When they aren't happy, I like trying to make them happy. When they finally do get happy, it's a good feeling. When they finally achieve the goal, it's really cool because you get to witness it."

Susan initially heard about Therapy & Fun through her friend's mother, who is a Special Needs Aide. But she is no stranger to the unique challenge of living and working with children

with disabilities. "I had a brother who had cerebral palsy because when he was being born, the doctor damaged his brain with the tools they were using." Giving back to the community that helped support her brother and family has led to her being honored with the prestigious Silver Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

But for Susan, the simple things are what make volunteering so fulfilling. "I love it when a child who barely speaks says thank you or when holding a child's bicycle seat gives them the courage to ride. It's a lot of fun and a good experience in life. It makes me a better person." ■

## A CHILD-CENTERED VISION OF SUCCESS

During the school year, Comprehensive Therapy Center provides special education services to many West Michigan charter schools. Our professional staff and school staff work together to provide children with special needs the best possible experience.

Mr. Lacey James, the William C. Abney Academy's school leader, credits our agency with achieving that experience.

"Comprehensive Therapy Center has been very positive and receptive. Our teacher leader helps us make sure we're doing the right thing for our kids."

Mr. James feels that the unique flexibility offered charter schools is crucial to success. "We have the luxury of changing things right away if they're not working for our kids. We

don't have to go a whole year without kids getting it."

"You have played an instrumental part in what we do. Therapists come into our building with all their expertise, making our kids feel wanted." About 25 to 30 students at Abney receive special education services for a variety of needs, including physical, emotional, cognitive, and speech-language impairments. Our vision of innovation in special education meshes well with Abney's same child-centered vision. "We appreciate Comprehensive Therapy Center so much. They've been a big part of us, meeting the needs of the parents and setting a direction for our kids."

William C. Abney is located at 1435 Fulton St. E., and is chartered by Grand Valley State University. ■



**Top:** Mr. Lacey James, school leader at William C. Abney Academy.



## MOMENTS FROM THERAPY & FUN 2008



These scenes from Therapy & Fun 2008 show how children with disabilities learn to walk, talk, learn, & play through goal-based, skill-building exercises and lots of volunteer & staff support.

## HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS, WEST MICHIGAN STYLE!

38th Annual Independent Bank and Jaycees Santa Parade (Starts at DeVos Place): November 18th, 10:00am -12:00pm. Santa Claus leads a troop of marching bands, floats, fire trucks, police cars, and more through downtown Grand Rapids. Free event.

Home for the Holidays (Grand Rapids Public Museum): November - December. This arts and crafts opportunity for kids is a great way to make home-made memories. Must pay admission. Free admission to Grand Rapids residents and area K-12 and college students with ID every Monday.

Christmas with the Animals (John Ball Park and Zoo): December 6th. Check out the Penguin Express, pet Santa's reindeer, and more while celebrating Christmas with furry friends. Winter admission is up to \$3.50.

Christmas in Sign Language (Deaf Expressions): December 13th and 20th, 6:00pm. Celebrate the holiday with signing friends and lots of good treats! This two-hour workshop cover holiday sign vocabulary as well as many, many Christmas carols in American Sign Language! Admission is \$15



### AREA EVENT CALENDARS

<http://www.grnow.com>

<http://www.mlive.com>

<http://www.wgvu.org>

<http://www.grcmc.org>

<http://www.grand-rapids.mi.us/>

<http://www.michigan.org/Things-to-Do/>

## TURN DOWN THE VOLUME!



Did you know that cranking the volume on your portable music player for more than five minutes a day can permanently damage your hearing?

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), any prolonged exposure at higher than 80 decibels and any frequent short-term exposure at 100 decibels can cause permanent noise-induced hearing loss.

Fortunately, some companies have taken notice. You can limit the volume levels on an iPod and on the Creative Zen player. In fact, on the iPod, a parent can even lock that volume so that a child is unable to turn up the volume past a safe level.

So make sure you crank it down and limit your listening time. Even the best jams aren't worth sacrificing your hearing.

## SETTING THE VOLUME LIMIT ON YOUR IPOD

1. From the first menu on your iPod, select Settings > Volume Limit.
2. Use the click wheel to adjust the volume level to just under half the possible volume. Press the Center button to set this limit.
3. The iPod will return you to the Volume Limit screen. Select "Set Combination" to create the passcode needed to change this limit. Use the click wheel to select a number, and the Center button to set it and move on to the next number.
4. When you've finished, pressing the Center button in the last number will return you to the Volume Limit screen.

If successful, whenever the volume is turned up, you will see a lock on the right hand side of the volume bar. ■



## PRE-READING SKILLS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD

We have all heard that reading to your child is essential. It helps develop the pre-reading skills your preschooler will need to learn how to read.

Children need to learn how to look at books. Following print the right way, turning pages, looking at pictures, and answering questions you ask as you read, are skills your child will learn.

Matching is another skill that will help your child. Keep working with those shape sorters and letter puzzles, and work on matching simple-to-complex patterns.

As you read nursery rhymes have your child say the rhymes with you. Rhyming helps future reading as well as spelling. Teach your child the sound each letter makes while talking through your alphabet books.

Since reading and writing go hand in hand, build your child's hand strength by drawing pictures, coloring and tracing – yes, letters!

Lastly, one of the very best things you can do to help reading skills is to talk with your child and build their language skills. Your child needs to hear and join in conversations with adults and children and listening to stories of all sorts. Have fun reading! ■



Erik and Tristan enjoy a good book.

# CHAMPIONS OF COMPREHENSIVE THERAPY CENTER

## Corporate and Foundation Contributions

- Louis M. Dexter Memorial Foundation
- Thomas Fox Foundation
- Bluma and Don Herman Foundation
- Herman Miller Foundation
- Meijer Community Rewards
- Nonprofit Technical Assistance Fund of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University
- Mika, Myers, Beckett, & Jones
- St. John Vianney

## In-Kind Contributions

- Sol and Irene Bach
- Bullseye Group
- Grand Rapids Police Dept.
- Grand Rapids Fire Dept.
- Rockford Ambulance

## Individual Contributors

- Bill Casey
- Thomas Fox
- Elizabeth Gillette
- Shirley Key
- Doris Landman
- Debra Mankoff
- Richard and Carla Siegle
- Marilyn Titcher
- James K. White

## Honorariums

- In Honor of*  
*Bette Buffington*
- Terese and Bert Smith
- Claude and Sharyl Titcher
- Clasina Young

- In Honor of*  
*Maribeth Garzelloni*
- Mary Allan
- Linda Goodheart

- In Honor of Anna Rosloniec*
- The Ziegler Family

- In Honor of Jean Silbar*
- Linda and Glenn Weaver

- In Honor of*  
*Charlie Wondergem*
- Casey Wondergem

## Memorials

- In Memory of*  
*Vi Wondergem*
- Casey Wondergem

- Memorials from the*  
*Silbar Voorbees Family for*

- Daniel Colwell
- Mitchell Fishman
- Midge Frank

## Opportunities to Volunteer!

### Monopoly

February 21, 2009



We need a heavy influx of new players for wheeling, dealing, prizes! It is a fun afternoon and our children benefit from the registration fees.

### Winefest

March 2009



Volunteers are needed to uncork the fun at this community fundraiser. We will need 30 people (21 and over) to help run this premier wine tasting event.

### Therapy & Fun

June - August 2009



Children ages 11 and up are welcome to apply to become therapy aides. Their summer will be filled with learning and service.

### CTC Board Openings



We are looking for board members. We are strong proponents of having a board that reflects the diversity of our community. Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month at noon.





Pictured from left to right are: Jean Silbar, Jim White and Terese Smith

## LAW FIRM SUPPORTS CHILDREN

“Wear Your Jeans to Work Day” is local law firm Mika Myers Beckett & Jones’ way to give back to the community. Employees pay to wear jeans and that money goes directly to charity. Jim White, partner at the law firm, nominated Comprehensive Therapy Center as the charity for this past quarter. “We are excited to be part of this fun, giving program and we are glad that Jim came to visit Therapy and Fun,” says Jean Silbar, Executive Director. ■

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP



**Spartan Brand UPC Labels**  
Collect labels and send them to us! We buy needed equipment and supplies.



**Meijer Community Rewards**  
By remembering to designate our number, **517227**, on your Meijer credit card, you can raise money for CTC!



**GoodSearch.com**  
Designate us as your charity then search the Web using this Yahoo! search engine.

We receive about a penny a search. It adds up!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Comprehensive Therapy Center

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## Connecting to the Community



### **BOARD PRESIDENT HONORED BY GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER**

This October, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce honored longtime Comprehensive Therapy Center board president Rodney Martin as the Volunteer of the Month.

Mr. Martin is the Diversity Partner at local law firm Warner Norcross and Judd. He is also the current chair of Multiracial Association of Professionals and the Regional Cultural Competency Advisory Council. "Your commitment to the MAP program and your involvement with the Regional Cultural Competency Advisory Council has been invaluable," president of the chamber Jeanne Englehart said. "You truly deserve this recognition."

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FEATURED BY GRAND RAPIDS PRESS**

Jean Silbar, who founded Comprehensive Therapy Center in 1980, was recently profiled by the Grand Rapids Press as a speech therapy pioneer. The article focuses on her three decades of work with children, helping them walk, talk, learn, and play.



The article, which explores her growth from young journalism major to innovative creator of award winning therapy programs, can be found online at [http://www.mlive.com/gpress/lifestyles/index.ssf/2008/08/profile\\_speech\\_therapy\\_pioneer.html](http://www.mlive.com/gpress/lifestyles/index.ssf/2008/08/profile_speech_therapy_pioneer.html).

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