



The Growing Tree News

A Publication of the E. John Gavras Center

182 North Street Auburn, NY 13021

Operated by U.C.P.A. of Cayuga County, Inc.
Richard M. Hansinger, Executive Director

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www.gavrascenter.com



Any phone call using 255-2746 enters the facility at 182 North Street and will be directed to the appropriate extension number depending on which staff member you are attempting to reach. The system has been engaged for a few weeks and the only extension numbers we have left to program are the IRA's. This should be completed shortly and then all sites are tied into one phone number. We have experienced a few issues which have been or will be addressed shortly. Once these are worked out the system should work flawlessly and cause no interruption in reaching your party.

A Message from Rick Hansinger

We are pleased to report that our Service Coordinators have moved out of the Day Habilitation/At Home Residential facility on Cranebrook Drive and into space located on the 4th floor of the YMCA. This transition has been extremely beneficial to consumers located at Cranebrook Drive, allowing expansion of rooms and spreading out of teams on both floors of the facility. The noise level and hectic pace in the building has subsided, leaving consumers and staff with a more relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. I wish we could have made this move a little sooner, however, by waiting we ended up with great office space located on the 4th floor of the YMCA. They have been wonderful landlords and welcomed us with open arms and hearts.

Staff members that have physically moved to the YMCA are all of our Service Coordinators, Alison Prentice, Jen Breck, Jenn Walker Brooks, Lisa Humphrey, Cindy Springstead, Jena Weed as well as MSC Records Clerk Kim Winslow. Also located at the YMCA will be Steve Smith, Maura Barron and Mimi Gilmore.

The other noteworthy item for all of our parents, guardians and staff is our phone system change. In order to continue our philosophy of having a real person answer the phone, it was necessary to purchase an additional computer board that allowed all of our sites to be tied in together with one phone system. Our original main agency number of 255-2746 is the only number that is now needed to call into the agency.

A Woman on a Mission

By Ellen Baumes with Amy Rankin



Amy Rankin flanked by Colleen Amedro, PT (left) and Ginger Farr, SLP (right).

Amy Rankin is a 27 year old woman on a mission, and the E. John Gavras Center is a part of that. In 2004 while walking home, Amy was hit by a drunk driver, resulting in a Traumatic Brain Injury. Her initial goals on her path to recovery were to walk, to talk, and to eat. These goals were more than achieved. According to Amy and her family, she is determined to exceed all expectations. I asked her therapists and parents to describe her, and I heard words like stubborn, tenacious, persistent, amazing, and optimistic.

Amy began receiving speech therapy at the E. John Gavras Center in 2007, and physical therapy in 2008. Amy feels like she really belongs here at the Gavras Center. She loves the friendly reception she receives when she walks in, and enjoys interacting with the preschool students she encounters here.

Her speech therapy goals were to improve her phonation and breath support; to work on written communication to support her goal of attending a college class at Cayuga Community College; and to pronounce certain sounds more clearly and easily. Amy tells me that her breath control has greatly improved. She is currently enrolled in the class at CCC and feels more confident about her writing and her speech is more easily understood.

Amy's physical therapy goals were to increase her balance and strength; to run safely, and to be able to play in her college's Alumni Field Hockey game. Amy reports that her balance is greatly improved and her strength has increased. She goes to the gym several times a week and her therapy has enabled her to improve in her weight training and aerobic exercises. Amy did play in her alumni game, with a helmet on of course, but had the balance and ability to play, and the breath support to not be gasping for air as the game went on.

Amy's long term goals include driving, continuing in her college classes, and getting back to working. Before the accident, Amy was a college athlete and a teacher. She would like to be a counselor in the future. She knows her goals are achievable, though initially her doctors never thought she would make it this far. A self-described stickler, she works extremely hard in therapy and won't end a session until she has performed an exercise perfectly. She is looking forward to a bright and productive future, and her determination is very inspiring.

Family Fun Day

This year's February Family Fun day at the Cayuga Community College was a big hit, especially for our Success By 6 program. The theme was Beach Party and the event even included some Hawaiian music and dance for the families to enjoy and participate in. This fun filled event gave the E. John Gavras Center's Success By 6 program a chance to inform and present families in the community the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The enrollment total for the Imagination Library was thirty-seven children, and each child went home with a book and book tote.

Success By 6 also participated in a kick off of the Share the Love of Reading challenge at the February Family Fun day. The challenge was offered to parents of children under five years of age in Cayuga County, asking that they read and record 100 books to their child in a three month period between 2/1/09 and 4/25/09. Amazingly a total of sixty six parents accepted the challenge and upon submitting their completed forms will be entered in a raffle for a prize. The true prize here was being able to reach so many families and see them anxious to read. Thank you families and thank you to the Family Fun day for such an amazing opportunity!



Two young attendees enjoy the Book Fair.

Sibshops from Freedom Recreational Services

Freedom Recreation is again hosting Sibshops Workshops, with the next one being held on 3/21. These workshops offer siblings of children with disabilities the chance to meet other brothers and sisters in a casual atmosphere and join the m in recreational activities. It is open to children between the ages of 8 and 17 who have a brother or sister with a disability. The workshops can help reduce a sibling's sense of isolation and address other concerns that they may have. The children quickly learn that there are others out there who experience the special joys and challenges that they do. Concerns are addressed through interactive dialogues and activities. Informal sharing and friendships often form among the participants, and the events are planned to be enjoyable!

For more information please contact Mary Ellen Perry at Freedom Recreational Services at 315-253-5465 or email at frs@centralny.twcbc.com.



Agency-Wide Food Drive

We will be collecting non-perishable food items to benefit the St. Alphonsus Food Pantry from March 16th through March 27, 2009. Suggestions include spaghetti sauce, pasta, rice, canned vegetables, canned fruit, tuna, soup, boxed macaroni and cheese, oatmeal, cereal, etc.

Please see Steve Smith (YMCA), Sue Sargent (Cranebrook), Linda Mizro (IRAs), or Marie Smigelski (North Street) for collection locations.

Spring clean your cupboards and let's help the hungry in our community!

KJ the DJ's Music Corner

By: Kelly Shanahan
The 2009 Grammy Awards

On Sunday February 8, 2009 on CBS, the recording academy held its 51st annual Grammy Awards Ceremony Live at the Staples Center in LA. Many of our music industry's great musicians showed their talents as there were many great performances from Coldplay, Radio, Estelle and Kanye West, Paul McCartney, Sugarland and Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood and Justin Timberlake just to name a few of the many great performances at this year's Grammy Awards. Among this year's Grammy winners included Coldplay with 3 Grammy wins including song of the year for their single, Viva La Vida, Best rock album for "Viva La Vida" and Best pop performance by a duo or group with vocal for their single "Viva La Vida". Other Grammy winners included John Mayer for best male Pop vocal performance for his single "Say". Adele won for best new artist and best female pop vocal performance for her single "Chasing Payments". Robert Plant and Alison Krauss both won 2 Grammys

for their collaboration on their single "Please Read the Letter", including Album of the year and best pop collaboration. Sugarland won a Grammy for Best country album, Jennifer Hudson won a Grammy for best R&B album and Lil Wayne also won a Grammy for Best rap album. Brenda Lee, Gene Autry, and Dean Martin also won Lifetime Achievement awards.

I thought this Grammy awards were awesome I really enjoyed this year's show and I look forward to the 2010 Grammy awards next year which I'm sure many of our great artists old and new will win just as they've always have in the past years of the Grammy awards and many years to come. All of this Grammy award info can be found on the official Grammys website www.Grammy.com.

Pictures from Preschool



Joan Meyers and her Bernese Mountain Dog Hawkeye along with Joan Bennett and her Pomeranian Pixie did a fun and informative dog show back in January.



Teacher Assistant Appreciation Day was March 18th. Pictured above are Carol Johnson, Jackie Drechsler, Patti Aldrich, Lori Crego, Amalia Richards and Nicole Liccione with a cake to say thanks for all that they do!



E. John Gavras Center
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Editor's Note: This is OUR newsletter. Please send me your ideas, your articles and your feedback. I can be reached @ (315) 255-2746, via internal email to Ellen Baumes, or at ellenb@gavrascenter.com. Thank you! The Growing Tree is available on our website, view it electronically @ www.gavrascenter.com

Employee Recognition Recipients

January 2009

Jamie Northrup
Lori Armstrong
Jessica Korthas
Brandon Magill
Amanda Evans
Maureen Carberry
Amy Gridley
Darlene Gates

WELCOME TO...

Kimberlee Winslow, Megan Sleight, Eli Petrosino, Kati Champagne, Jason Colvin

FAREWELL TO...

Tammy Matthews, Megan Goodell, Katrina Smith, Cory Rathbun

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1 – Healthy Foods Presentation in the Preschool
April 10 – 17 Spring Recess

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Katerina Baney and her husband on the birth of their son.

Kelly Shanahan on the birth of her niece and namesake.

Thought for the day...

If you look the right way, you can see the whole world is a garden.

- Frances Hodgson Burnett, The Secret Garden