



# 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

A United Way Agency Fall 2011  
www.gavrascenter.com

## A Message from Rick Hansinger



### Whooh let the Tigers out?!

Our fall session has begun and as in previous years we are off to a busy start. Special Education Preschool is almost full and their calendar has been very busy with fall activities. Day Habilitation has also entered the fall with many activities and as usual they are very busy. In addition Residential Services have been active and so the agency is buzzing with activity at all levels.

Once again, I have to report on the economic status or lack thereof, at both the Federal and State level, which should not be a surprise to anyone. Our program reimbursements at all levels in New York State are shrinking. On the political front, it is easier to target agencies by reducing our funding and masquerade it as everyone sharing in the pain. Rather than address the waste in government and tackle the tough issues, it is just so easy to say we are going to reduce you not for profits. That is exactly what has been happening and we expect it to continue on into 2012.

Finally, I hope everyone has had the opportunity to receive a flu shot if you would like one. One can only hope for a weak and short flu season. Remember, hand washing is one of the best ways to combat flu season.

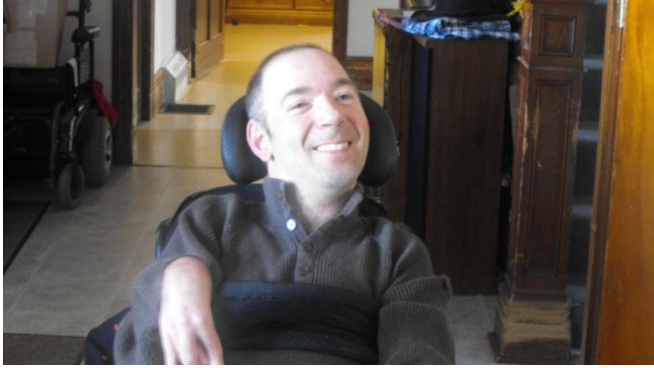


### Owens Apple Orchard

On Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, the preschoolers set out on the Big Yellow school buses for an apple picking adventure to Owens Apple Orchard In October; our preschool children learned where apples come from. We went on a field trip to Owen Apple Orchards. Many of our mom's or dad's went with us. Some of them even rode the big yellow bus. There were even some grandma's and grandpa's on the trip! Mr. Tripp, the apple farmer, drove the tractor for the wagon rides and taught us the best way to pick an apple. We all got a bag to fill with apples. There were many smiles and full bags of apples when we left that day. There were also many, many apple cores left behind. Those apples were delicious!



## A Light Switch Moment!



Hamilton IRA follows through on a good idea and makes a positive step to improve its bottom line.

Budget woes are on the minds of each of us no matter where we reside. According to Nancy Kratz, the house manager at the Hamilton IRA, the residents there have been discussing ways to pitch in to improve the house hold budget. House mate Rob Clark came up with a good idea that took some follow through from the rest of the house staff.

Rob's mobility is limited so the residents help him out by switching his bedroom light on so he can go in and out of his room independently. Often the light would remain on for many hours during the day or evening when Rob was not in the room. So Rob thought "what if we could get a light that was motion censored?" That way it would automatically come on when Rob was in the room but would shut off after a certain amount of time if no motion was detected in the room. Rob told his idea to a team member and that team member told Nancy Kratz. Both thought it was a good solution and placed a work order in to Dave Pollay. Well Dave in his bag of goodies already had a motion sensor switch. He went right over and replaced the light switch! This was an example of great teamwork and a better solution to supporting Rob's independence and saving some cents in the house budget. Kudos to Rob and the Hamilton Ave IRA!

### **Opportunities may be slipping away... Although it sounds farfetched, smoking could be keeping you from achieving more.**

Similar to many other companies, E. John Gavras Center enforces a smoke-free workplace and encourages you not to smoke. Why, you might ask?

- Smoking raises the health care costs for the entire company because smokers tend to be sick more often.
- Smoking-related illnesses increase the need to hire short-term replacement employees.
- Smokers increase insurance costs for both the company and all employees to cover expensive premiums.

- Secondhand smoke presents a risk to anyone nearby when you are smoking.

E. John Gavras Center is not the only entity which does not tolerate smoking. In fact, according to the American Cancer Society, many landlords will not rent to smokers because maintenance and insurance costs are too high to bear. Also, many public buildings, concert venues and sporting complexes do not allow smoking and many communities are going smoke-free, prohibiting smoking in restaurants and bars.



On October 21, Susan L Scharoun, PhD.

We were very fortunate to have Susan L. Scharoun, PhD present to us for both our Staff Development Day and for our ASHA approved Continuing Education Event. Dr. Scharoun's presentation in the morning was on "Behavior = Communication" and in the afternoon was on "Social Relationships: What are they all about?". Fifty-nine people attended the conference with 23 attendees earning .6 Continuing Education Units. Dr. Scharoun's presentation was favorably received and outwardly praised. When asked the question, "How will you apply the information?" an outpouring of positive responses were obtained such as:

**"Gave me great ways to explain behavior to parents and strategies to modify it."**

**"Oh my goodness! I can apply all of the information throughout my days to achieve better, more positive behavior. I can see many of my errors and how to change them into positive which will = more positive behavior from my students."**

**"I have more knowledge and tools to handle difficult behaviors (more patience, more positive comments, more understanding)."**

In summary, we felt it was a successful event. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to BOCES where our conference was held. The room was very conducive to learning and the staff there was extremely accommodating and helpful.

Pat Cleaver and Diane deRoos  
Continuing Education Administrators



E. John Gavras Center Basket Raffle Fundraiser 2011

Barb Gray is organizing the Basket Raffle Fundraiser again this year. All proceeds go towards our Christmas Elf Program. This has proven to be a wonderful fundraiser for the families that we service in addition to creating a lot of excitement in the agency.

There are already a few baskets on the table in the front office at North St. Barb will be taking pictures of all of the baskets and make them available to all sites. The drawing will be held at the Christmas Party on December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn. You do not need to be present to win!

**How can you help?** Get creative and put a themed basket together for the auction, have the basket to the North St. office by Wednesday, **November 30<sup>th</sup>** and **BUY** many tickets to win the basket of your choice!

**The winners of the  
First funky Sock Contest**



Pictured are Barbara Gray, Missy DeMuth, Danielle Ambrose and Rick Hansinger

First Place- Danielle Ambrose,  
Second Place- Rick Hansinger  
Third Place - Barbara Gray

Thanks for participating and start shopping for Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>!

**11 CP of NYS Annual Conference  
Celebrate Staff Recognition Awards**

October 24-26, 2011 the state held its annual conference.

On Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> over 460 people gathered in the banquet hall for the annual staff recognition awards. This year the staff recognition committee selected two employees to attend the conference to receive the "Celebrate Staff" recognition award. It was the year of the Nancy's. Nancy Damalt and Nancy Kratz were selected!

**Nancy Kratz** is the Hamilton IRA manager and was selected for her versatility as an employee. She has been a preschool teacher, day habilitation worker and IRA Manager. In all three positions Nancy has been a success. Nancy we thank you for your dedication to the agency, staff and people served during your time here.

**Nancy Damalt** is recognized not only for her dedication to helping those in need of speech therapy through her innovative and caring approaches but for her 35 years of helping those in need in our community.

Happy 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the E John Gavras Center!

I urge you to go to the link below and read the Closing Plenary Speech by Alex Freeman. It is truly inspirational and demonstrates how important each of us is to one another.

[http://www.cpfny.org/Libraries/2011\\_Annual\\_Conference/Closing\\_Plenary\\_Speech\\_by\\_Alex\\_Freeman.sflb.ashx](http://www.cpfny.org/Libraries/2011_Annual_Conference/Closing_Plenary_Speech_by_Alex_Freeman.sflb.ashx)

Editor's Note: This is OUR newsletter. The Growing Tree is available on our website [www.gavrascenter.com](http://www.gavrascenter.com).

<p><b>Welcome to...</b> Welcome to the following staff:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Kim Winslow</td> <td>Kim Gern</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Denise Oster</td> <td>Ashley Acome</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Robin Streever</td> <td>Ed Derck</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Jim Festa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amy Reif</td> <td>Cammy Marek</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Jill Hand</td> </tr> </table>	Kim Winslow	Kim Gern	Denise Oster	Ashley Acome	Robin Streever	Ed Derck		Jim Festa	Amy Reif	Cammy Marek		Jill Hand	<p><b>Good bye...</b> to the following staff:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Brandon Magill</td> <td>Megan Miller</td> <td>Steve Ross</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kelly Shanahan</td> <td>Lisa Fronce</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Brandon Magill	Megan Miller	Steve Ross	Kelly Shanahan	Lisa Fronce	
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<p><b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b></p> <p>November 10- Sensory Night</p> <p>Friday Evenings – Waiver Respite Reservation Only</p> <p>November 17-World Prematurity day</p> <p>November 30- Baskets are due for Fundraiser</p> <p>December 2<sup>nd</sup>- Funky Sock Contest</p> <p>December 9<sup>th</sup>-E John Gavras Holiday Party, Holiday Inn</p>	<p><b>~Quote~</b></p> <p><i>We cannot control the card that we are dealt, we just have to play it.</i></p> <p><i>Remarks from</i></p> <p><b><i>Closing Plenary Speech</i></b>  <b><i>Alexander Freeman</i></b>  <b><i>October 26, 2011</i></b>  <b><i>CP of NYS Annual Conference</i></b></p>																		

