



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 Spring/Summer 2010
www.gavrascenter.com



A Message from Rick Hansinger

Once again we approach the end of a school year and beginning of summer programming for not only preschoolers, but Day Habilitation which sees a significant increase of school age consumers. For summer, which used to be our time to regroup and prepare for the fall, is now busy and bustling with action. We would not have it any other way.

As this nice weather comes upon us, it is a reminder to enjoy the outdoors and take a moment to breathe and believe. Our challenges in programming will continue, not only in relation to keeping our quality of service as high as possible, but also to meet declining program revenues. The State of New York continues to operate in a dysfunctional manner and every choice they make involves and revolves around cutting rates. Two years ago I advised staff that we had yet to see the worst of their fiscal woes and this is exactly where we are at, the worst is still coming and will continue to come for some time.

So our challenges will continue and we will strive to meet them head on and do the best we can with the changes passed down. Note I said changes! We are now operating in an environment that change will be necessary and often. In order to stay ahead or anticipate how cuts will affect us, we need to prepare and plan for any and all situations. I ask your patience and understanding as the Administrative Team works through all of the challenges that face us. Quite often staff report they did not know, or why couldn't you warn us this change was coming. Sometimes we are unaware of what happens at the State level until the last minute and we have to react accordingly.

This is why we have different contingency plans and as we move through the summer and into fall, we will attempt to keep department coordinators informed of changes at the state or local levels. We will do our best to prepare the agency for major revenue shifts that have the least amount of impact to consumers, families and staff. Have a safe and enjoyable summer and I look forward to working with all staff through the challenges we face.

IRA Training Day

By Jennifer St. Mire-Zammett

On April 16th IRA a Staff Training Day was held at the YMCA for IRA staff. We watched a video and the topic shown was about "10 Effective Training Techniques" to use with the people we serve.

1. "Teach, don't correct" talked about letting individuals decide on their own choice and if not correct to show them ways they can come up with a better choice.
2. "Teach the skill 2-3 times daily" which encourages repetition, repetition, repetition in natural settings and teachable moments preferred.
3. "Teach in a person's zone of learning" which reminds us everyone learns differently and we need to tailor the teaching technique we use around how a person learns and what will work best for them. It may be with pictures, tangible objects, etc.
4. "Use a Multi-Sensory Approach" which involves all the senses. Ask questions they can answer, objects or pictures they can feel or touch, listen for sounds, etc.
5. "Don't be the person's frontal lobe" encourages individuals to think independently without staff immediately "doing for" or giving direction or the answer. Use multiple choice, Yes/ No, Guided, or open-ended questions to encourage people to have to think about the answer or choice themselves.
6. "Provide Choices" and provide real choices and help people feel important and in control of decisions made for themselves.
7. "Don't over-prompt" and to prompt only when needed. Provide time for processing what has been said and to respond. Start with the least amount of prompting needed and build from there.
8. "Self-Evaluate" which talked about individuals checking their own work and using tools such as pictures or picture cards as reference when

completing a task. An example was someone used actual pictures of themselves taken from head to toe dressed clean and neatly. They were able to reference these pictures before going out to ensure they looked like the pictures when looking in a full length mirror.

9. "Provide Praise" encourages staff to praise not only a person's accomplishments but also the person's thinking process.
10. "Teach Others" which not only reinforces the skill for themselves but also boosts self-esteem that they have learned a skill well enough to be able to teach to others. This is a very empowering feeling.

This training was an opportunity for staff to self-evaluate areas they felt they did well in and to identify areas they wanted to strengthen. The training also allowed staff to see situations from a consumer's point-of-view and how things we do can either enhance or hinder a person's learning and growth. If we're focusing on how we can be teaching rather than doing, along with the tools we use, we will be helping enhance the learning process of the people we serve.

Preschool Happenings

The end of school ceremonies and picnic were held on June 23rd marking the last day of Preschool for many of our students. As the days warmed up, and the playground echoed with the laughter of children playing outdoors between lessons. Each of the teams worked hard and gave their best this year, and now the children are ready for Kindergarten.

A summer school session is now in progress, and September will quickly be here, proving the Gavras Center Preschool is always busy. We hope the staff not working this summer enjoys a well-earned vacation and we'll see you all in a couple of months!



The Preschool Celebrated Paraprofessionals Day on April 7th, 2010.



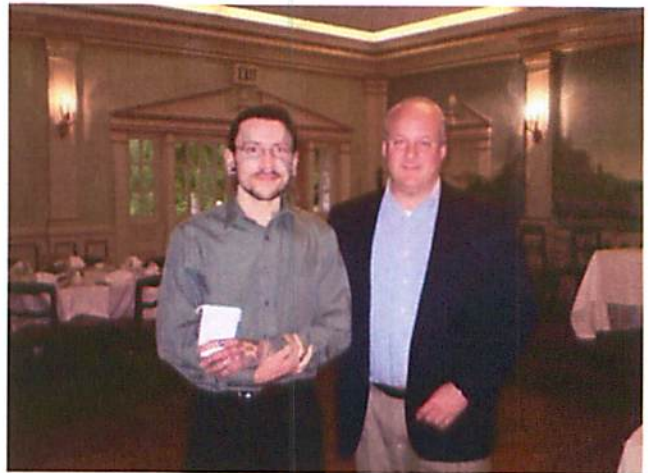
A good message for all of us!

Annual Board Dinner

The E. John Gavras Center Board of Directors hosted the annual Board Dinner on May 19th, 2010 at the Springside Inn. After a delicious meal, Board President Andy Tehan presented service anniversary awards. At the end of the festivities, Nurse Sylvia Lukins was honored for her 29 years with us, and wished well on her upcoming retirement.



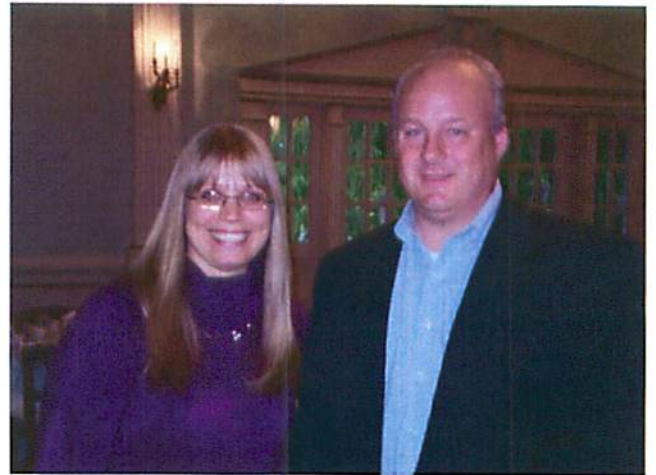
Rick addresses the assembled guests.



Community Resource Specialist Dan Coon receives his 5-year award from Board President Andy Tehan.



Community Resource Specialist Cheryl Curtis receives her 5-year award.



Medical Billing Specialist Christie Hamilton receives her 5-year award.



Speech Language Pathologist Ginger Farr receives her 5-year award.



IRA Coordinator and Nurse Linda Mizro receives her 5-year award.



Community Resource Specialist Denise Fedigan receives her 5-year award.



Community Resource Specialist Kimberly Osborne receives her 5-year award.



Day Habilitation Team Leader Renee Schneider receives her 5-year award.



Training and Enrichment Coordinator Maura Barron and Training and Enrichment Director Stephen Smith receive their 5-year awards.



Occupational Therapist Jane Seamans receives her 5-year award.



Director of Finance Danielle Ambrose receives her 10-year award.



Customer Response Assistant Kelly Shanahan receives her 5-year award.



Human Resources Director Amy Gavras receives her 10-year award.

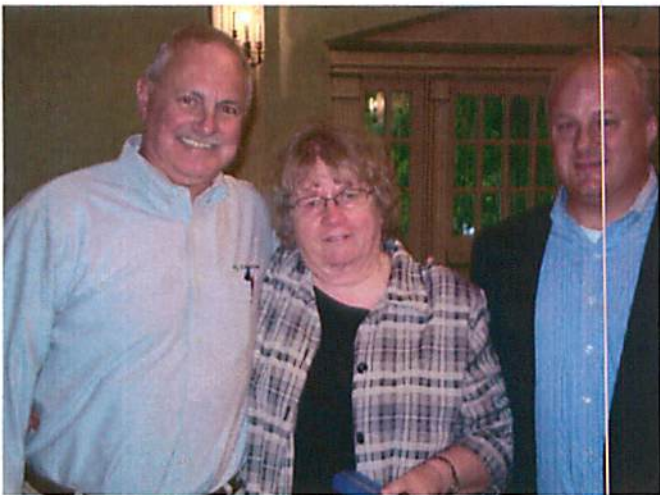


Medicaid Service Coordinator Alison Prentice receives her 10-year award.

- Octopus Garden - Rick Hansinger
- Green Thumb - Diane deRoos
- Summer Beauty - Gina Abel
- Indulgence - Gale Fritz
- Fiesta - Anne Cuff
- Waterfall Pictures - Gina Abel
- Butterfly Picture - Rick Hansinger
- Sunset Pictures - Rick Hansinger
- Hummingbird Picture - Mickie Post

Corporate Challenge

For the second year the E. John Gavras Center was represented in the JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge on June 22nd. As always this event draws participants from all over the Central New York region, coming together to walk or run for a good cause. This year's beneficiary was CNY Works Youth Services. Keep this in mind for next year's race!



Executive Director Rick Hansinger and Board President Andy Tehan congratulate Nurse Sylvia Lukins on her retirement.



Team Gavras Members Occupational Therapist Jenny McNabb, Physical Therapist and Intake Coordinator Kathy Mabbett, Occupational Therapist Jane Seamans, and Preschool Paraprofessional Kim Winslow walked the course.

Christmas in July Basket Raffle

Our Christmas in Summer Basket Raffle was a huge success! We raised \$988.00! A great big thank you to everyone who donated their time and money into putting all of those fabulous baskets together, and to everyone who bought tickets. The money will benefit our Christmas families this year, and if more interest is shown we may have another raffle before Christmas.

Congratulations to all of the winners:

- Red and White Delight - Amy Gavras
- Summer Fun - Linda Mizro
- Clean Machine - Deb Sleight
- Tropical Blues Party - Jack Lesch
- Star Wars - Rich Fronce
- Baby Love - Cathy Barrigar
- Dr. Seuss - Payton Guido



Occupational Therapist Kelly Greene runs the course at Long Branch Park.



E. John Gavras Center
 182 North Street
 Auburn, NY 13021

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

April 2010

MEGAN O'NEILL CINDY DELMAR
 TONI VANNOSTRAND JENNY MCNABB

May 2010

BEN GABLE JACK LESCH JOHN WALDBILLIG MAUREEN
 CARBERRY ANN MARIE JACKSON

June 2010

ANNA WILHELM-ELLIS BRAD SALMON
 LAURA STRATTON KATIE NORTHRUP
 KAYLA GANNETTI CARRIE LUKINS
 MARISSA REYNOLDS COLLEEN PODFIGURNY

Welcome to...

Dan Clare * Jesse Blaisdell
 Jess Putvin * Brittany Bennett

Farewell to...

Jessica Korthas * Bill Laderer
 Renee Dantuono * Garrett Shepherd
 Sue Miles * Heather Miles
 Kayley Miles

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday Evenings – Waiver Respite Reservation Only

Staff Development Day - September 7
First Day of Preschool – September 8

Speech Conference October 21-22

Thought for the day...

Anything is possible. Anything can be.

-Shel Silverstein