

Winter 2017



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Carole Soricelli, MS, OTR, *Director*

The title of this newsletter says it all — kids matter to us. As an occupational therapist and Director of Trinitas Children's Therapy Services, I speak for all of our occupational, physical and speech therapists when I say we take true professional and personal satisfaction in our role in what our children can achieve. It makes our day when we see a child become aware of what he or she can accomplish, what that means to themselves and others, and how that can propel them further.

We offer our helping hands by applying Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to our work. The basis of SDT is that we are all active beings. Throughout life, we grow, master challenges, and come to a sense of self that is based on our experiences. But, this growth, mastery, and sense of self doesn't just happen automatically. It all needs continuous social input and support.

What goes on socially for each of us can lead us to be actively engaged with others and experience necessary psychological growth; or it can prevent that growth from happening. SDT boils down

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SCHOOL-BASED NEWS

A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By: Joe Volfman

When you hear the word "wheelchair" what comes to mind? Is it limitations? Or maybe restrictions?

My name is Joe Volfman, and I can proudly say that I love who I am, my wheelchair, and my life. I currently compete in track, field, archery, swimming, powerlifting, cycling, and mono skiing. I am a Paralympic hopeful in 2020. I am also biking a 26 mile marathon at the end of January, and then I am training for a 181 mile marathon at the end of July. I am also a DJ/Producer. That's a lot right?

You may be asking yourself, how is this possible, or how does he have the strength to do this all? Well, I train seven days a week for three hours a day. Why am I telling you this? Well, because sports changed my life forever. I joined the *Lightning Wheels* two years ago, and never regretted any second of it. If you want to do a



sport or have a passion no matter the situation, DO IT!

Don't set boundaries for yourself or limitations. Break free of them and prove everyone that you CAN DO IT! To all the parents out there, I know it's scary, hard, and frustrating, but you have to let them do it. I know it's easier said than done, but trust me it will change their life forever, make them more independent and boost their confidence.

I always say my disability suffers from me, not the other way around. You only live once, do what you love, and enjoy every second of it!

A PHYSICAL THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By: Benjamin Lipman, PT

Many students with congenital gross motor issues have stopped receiving school based physical therapy before high school. Working with high school students receiving school based therapy can provide challenges and rewards unique to that age group. The opportunity to help students take those physical steps down the high school graduation aisle can be as monumental and rewarding as watching young children take their first steps.

As students enter their teen years, muscle mass and focus often improve and this has the potential to open up an opportunity to enhance functional skills that can have life changing benefits. It is important to try to channel the individual's personal interests and motivators when creating a treatment plan. Many students find interests in

their school's athletic programs. When students consider themselves to be athletes and train like it, therapy goals can be gained that might not have been possible in the past. It's helpful to consider the following when exploring athletic based activities as alternatives to physical therapy programs:

1. Utilize progressive resistive exercises including lifting weights. Maximizing strength has functional benefits, and strength training can be a great stress reliever for high school students.
2. Integrate balance training into the resistance program to strengthen the core muscles in functional patterns.
3. When students exceed the more optimistic long term goals, take the advice from Randy Pousch the

author of "The Last Lecture" and continue to push them even harder. Create that just-right challenge.

4. Never do a quick grip strength test by having students grab your hand as tightly as they can. You may learn your lesson the hard way.

A passion for personal fitness in the high school years can help form lifelong habits that can benefit someone through college and beyond. Some of the students become personal trainers, others advocates, and others become elite athletes that inspire others. The key is to never stop believing in them and remind them to keep pushing every limit that crosses their path.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE *Continued from page 1*

to how personal effort can move each of us forward, how we take in and use interactions with others, and how those personal and social elements help us make positive developmental strides.

By incorporating SDT into our approach at Trinitas Children's Therapy Services, we work individually with our children to guide them toward self-motivation. We help them realize they can unearth their inner resources to grow, meet challenges, and constantly build on their sense of self. We also encourage them to look beyond themselves for motivation, to help them realize that others can be just as influential on their growth as individuals. When they see another child successfully develop and master a new skill, they are often encouraged to rise to that same challenge. When a teacher or therapist expresses care, concern and support, children begin to make connections. And, voila, there is a greater sense of self.

When our occupational, physical, and speech therapists work with our students, they enjoy these "ah-ha" moments time and time again. With their professional expertise and experience, they help children develop and master a variety of skills and abilities in the classroom or other settings. Together, they set in motion a succession of events and accomplishments that can help define success and engagement for years to come. Their work prepares our students to function, to their greatest ability, as valuable and productive members of society.

Each child deserves to experience a sense of autonomy, develop the skills to help them grasp what competence means, and understand how these two elements lead to effective and positive relatedness to others. All of this makes self-determination real and tangible in their lives.

When we see the beginnings of autonomy, competence and relatedness rise to the surface in our children, yes, they've made our day.

WORKING IN TANDEM

By: Kathryn Salamone, BA, MA

The recent move of The DATA Group into space at the Trinitas Children's Therapy Services (TCTS) Center brings both groups together to help them realize shared goals. "We're happy to welcome The DATA Group," says Carole Soricelli, Director of TCTS. "Their specialty of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is highly-sought by families and school districts. Having them nearby in our Center makes it easier for our families to obtain much-needed services and for us to respond to school district inquiries. This arrangement falls in line with our vision to be a full-service therapy provider for our children and families."

So, how does The DATA Group's philosophy and approach result in making a shared vision lead to achieving shared goals?

As Craig Domanski, PhD, BCBA-D, Clinical Director, explains, "Tara Sheerin, MEd, BCBA, Executive Director, and I aim to provide ABA and behavior-analytic supports for children and adults with autism or other behavioral challenges. Many of our learners may have difficulties in certain areas, but with solid ABA intervention, we can help them make progress by learning new skills."

Building on newly-acquired skills leads to replacing less desirable "old habits" with more appropriate behaviors. "To do this, we individualize how we structure the environment, design materials, and provide reinforcement. In that way,

we feel that we can help our learners make great progress," says Craig.

Learner and instructor both contribute to success. Together their specific behaviors offer a true measurement of progress. "Data collection and analysis is a hallmark feature of a true ABA program. Some programs may offer behavioral supports, but the data collection is what puts the 'analysis' in 'applied behavior analysis'," notes Tara.

Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) like Craig and Tara use data analysis to monitor progress. Then, data-based decisions can be made about whether to continue, modify, or terminate an intervention.

ABA can be successfully transferred to the home environment with the right methods. "Craig and I feel that The DATA Group offers an incredibly unique service in its delivery of home programming," says Tara. "We often hear from parents that their children 'are different at home.' As parents ourselves, we know that kids may behave differently for their parents than they do for their teachers. Based on that knowledge, we believe that it's important for learners to use skills across settings, especially at home."



The DATA Group doesn't subscribe to a "train and hope" philosophy — no crossing of fingers that what is taught in Setting A is demonstrated in Setting B. "To increase the likelihood of true generalization of skills, we teach those skills in the actual environments where we want them to occur," explains Craig.

Tara and Craig agree that a major contributing big factor for success of their model is a high level of parental involvement. "Parents get to see exactly what we're doing in each session. We're also able to give parents instant feedback as we observe how they're working with their children, whether it be homework, leisure skills, chores, social skills, or community participation," Tara says.

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PROGRESSION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

By: Kathryn Salamone, BA, MA

Once the needs of special needs children are identified, with the guidance of therapists, educators, and, of course, their family members, they begin on a path to move forward. It's a collaborative effort.

For young children, this is reinforced in the classroom and individual therapy sessions geared to their current needs.

"Everyone involved in the growth and development of a special needs child is committed to that child. We help them make steps that will make them feel capable and successful," says Carole Soricelli, Director of Trinitas Children's Therapy Services. "Outside the family environment, we create settings in which they acquire skills they need and show them how each step is one of many they will take throughout their lifetimes. There is a grand design to help children become ready to be part of the world

beyond."

Trinitas Children's Therapy Services has taken a step to foster that readiness as children transition into adulthood. Through a newly-established partnership with Community Access Unlimited (CAU) based in Elizabeth, TCTS will provide OT, PT and ST at CAU's Cranford location on Myrtle Street. CAU provides broad-based services such as independent living skills, money management, and self-advocacy. For its "members" who are high school graduates, CAU provides pre-vocational and vocational opportunities. CAU members share rewarding creative expression and enjoyable recreational opportunities. They get to see what the world can offer and how they can be part of the world in a meaningful way. Thanks to programs like those of CAU, many special needs/developmentally disabled young adults often successfully enter community col-

leges or universities, or the job setting.

The combined efforts of TCTS and CAU have the potential to reduce the number of young people who may end up continuing to live at home and remain dependent on their caregivers.

"We hope to assist members in overcoming their physical disabilities. For members of CAU who qualify, our Occupational, Physical and Speech Therapy services are being offered so they can access CAU programs. Through remediation or modifications that TCTS can provide, we'll be able to influence the number of people who will be able to functionally engage in meaningful life roles," Carole explains.

Carole sums up: "We want to help our school-age clients meaningfully and successfully transition into adulthood. We look at this partnership as the next step."

WORKING IN TANDEM *Continued from page 3*

For parents who are already under stress, the in-home teaching The DATA Group provides wins high praise for parental inclusion every step of the way.

Since crises can occur, Craig and Tara bring their backgrounds and experience to managing those circumstances. "The best way to avoid a crisis is to be ahead of it, to prevent it from happening in the first place," says Tara. The go-to strategy is to turn to newly-acquired appropriate skills: waiting; asking for a break; asking for help, using other ways to

deal with potentially frustrating events. Applying these skills requires a gradual approach over a period of time.

While these new and important skills are being learned, some learners may exhibit highly challenging and potentially dangerous behaviors such as aggression, self-injury, or elopement. "When a learner has a history of engaging in these very serious behaviors, we make sure that anyone working with them, including their parents, has received training in Crisis Management

techniques from a certified instructor," stresses Craig. Even in the most difficult situations, learners' safety is of the utmost importance.

The DATA Group provides Crisis Management certification courses to other programs, school districts, and even individual families in need. These courses lead to certification in various de-escalation, prevention, and restraint techniques. "We can individually tailor courses to meet the needs of our clients based on their own unique situations,"

TCTS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY...

TCTS is an organization for all seasons as you'll see in this round-up of events and activities that the staff participates in throughout Union and other counties.

iPads Make a Difference, and So Does Cursive

There's an old saying: nothing succeeds like success. That's seen every day as TCTS has become the beneficiary of grants and funding that have put iPads into the hands of students and staff.

"We currently have nearly 60 iPads, the most recent purchase made thanks to repeat funding from PNC Bank Foundation," explains Carole Soricelli, Director of TCTS. "Provident Bank Foundation and Summit Area Public Foundation have also played a key role through their donations of multiple iPads. Several community groups based in Elizabeth endorsed our work with iPads and conducted fundraising events to make additional contributions. Dr. Rodolfo Colaco of Trinitas Regional Medical Center

and his wife was the first TRMC employee to contribute an iPad to TCTS. Since then the Trinitas Health Foundation's Taking Care of the Hospital – iPad Fund has raised funds to enable our department and others to purchase multiple iPads, apps and iPad accessories.

Since 2013, TCTS has shown how iPads have an impact with children who receive its services. iPads add to the already comprehensive and cohesive therapeutic and academic interventions provided by therapists and teachers. At times, they can make the most of each child's opportunity for success. They are one of many resources used to build a host of motor, social, visual-perceptual and cognitive skills in a format that many children are excitedly engage in.

"The Trinitas Health Foundation has been instrumental in advocating for TCTS technological needs. The foundation has helped us keep pace with learning

tools that are undeniably keys to student success," Carole sums up.

As schools increasingly depart from teaching handwriting, TCTS still believes it's important for children to learn the fine motor skills needed to put pencil to paper. Our Scribbles to Script program, a fixture in the Center's curriculum for 14 years, stresses that handwriting should be on equal footing with keystroke skills. Others believe that, too.

A \$5,000 Turrell grant has made it possible for TCTS to offer the Scribbles to Script program at elementary schools in Elizabeth for children 3 to 5 years of age who are not classified as requiring special education, but identified by school personnel as struggling with developing early prewriting and writing skills. Turrell has supported this program in the Elizabeth schools, which has received praise from parents and school personnel alike, for the past 11 years.



Setting the Thanksgiving Table

Staffers of TCTS took time from their own advance preparation for Thanksgiving 2016 to collect enough money to purchase menu items for the holiday feast to help three families enjoy the America's national day of thanks. Thanksgiving baskets were filled with traditional items and each included a gift card to enable families to add their own personal finishing touches for their holiday celebration. Generosity at Thanksgiving never gets old at TCTS!



A Strong Voice in Support of Autism

Since TCTS works so closely with children with autism spectrum disorder, it's natural for staff members to actively support the annual Autism Speaks walk. Some 21 staff members, and family/friends either took to the paths of Nomenhagen Park in Cranford for the 2016 walk or participated as virtual walkers with the TCTS team. Along the way, they demonstrated their support of children and families who live with the disorder and how critical it is to promote and enhance better understanding of autism. By showing its support of the children TCTS works with each day, the Organization drove home the message that it's committed to these special children and their families. "As awareness of and participation in the walk continues to grow, Autism Speaks offers an excellent opportunity for professionals in the field of child development to interface with families as well as the general community," explains Carole Soricelli, Director of TCTS. "We at TCTS are proud to be a part of this effort. This year's group made a lasting impression on all who attended the walk and raised nearly \$1,500 for the cause."



Teachable Moments

Teens are often a difficult audience to reach with health information that can help them today and establish lifestyle patterns for the future. It's a tough sell but it's one that Trinitas Regional Medical Center has tackled successfully for more than 10 years. Trinitas Children's Therapy Services was one of a dozen health services and functions of Trinitas that participated in the "Healthy Leap into Summer" health fair and exposition at Elizabeth High School in May. The overarching message is that healthier

living and positive lifestyle choices should be a part of their lives as well as the lives of family and friends; much of the information presented is designed for sharing with others. Physical fitness demonstrations, information on lung disease and how to prevent stroke (brain attack), blood pressure checks and cholesterol screenings were part of Trinitas' contributions to the event. At the TCTS booth, teens took an upbeat exercise and fitness quiz that the staff developed just for them.



Visit our Facebook page...
**Trinitas Children's
Therapy Services**

SPRING 2017 PROGRAMS

SCRIBBLES TO SCRIPT

Children from preschool (prewriting) through elementary school (cursive) have the opportunity to use the Handwriting Without Tears® program to learn pre-writing skills, proper letter formation, and writing within the given lines. Multi-sensory fine motor, visual-motor, and visual-perceptual activities help to reinforce learning and make writing fun! 45-minute classes held once weekly.

SPORTS 1 STEP AT A TIME

Children between the ages of 4 & 12 have the opportunity to receive an introduction into several fall/winter sports, including soccer, basketball, football, bowling, and kickball, in a non-competitive group setting. Overseen by a PT. 45-minute sessions held once weekly on Mondays from 4:15 - 5:00pm.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES

Children between the ages of 4 & 12 have the opportunity to become social butterflies by engaging in fun non-challenging tabletop and movement-based activities. The highly therapeutic classes will be overseen by a Speech & Language Pathologist and/or an OT. Skills taught include turn taking, topic maintenance, appropriate question asking, following non-verbal cues, and using manners. 45-minute sessions held once weekly on Wednesdays from 4:15 – 5:00pm.

TYPING WHIZKIDS

Children from 1st grade through middle school will participate in functional tasks that will allow them to learn efficient keyboarding/typing skills. From key location and finger placement, to speed

and accuracy, children will learn this valuable skill the correct way. Overseen by an OT. 45-minute sessions held once weekly on Thursdays from 6:15 – 7:00pm.

NEW AND IMPROVED!

CAMP TRINITAS - SUMMER 2017

Now Accepting Registration for Camp Trinitas 2017

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL: First 10 Camp registrants receive a 10% discount.

WHOLE CAMP EXPERIENCE SPECIAL: Sign up for all 7 weeks and all 28 days and receive an additional 10% discount.

We are excited to announce big changes to our 7th annual camp. We will now be located off-site, with a classroom, an outdoor space, a playground, a kitchen, and a larger gym area! We will also now be offering the option of either a ½ day or a full day! The program is the perfect opportunity to have children gain new skills or maintain recently-learned motor and academic skills without a full day or even a full week commitment. Sign up for as many days or weeks as you would like. Sign up for a ½ day or a full day. Allow your child to participate in a camp directly organized and supervised by skilled clinicians in their respective fields. Camp Trinitas is run by OT's, PT's, Speech Therapists, and ABA clinicians, to address each child's specific needs.

Our programs and group sessions are a great alternative to direct therapy services. They give children the opportunity to address key developmental areas in structured but busier environments, which is more reflective of typical real-life situations.

10 TIPS WORKSHOPS

Come take part in the 7th year of our highly successful **Ten Tips Workshop Series**. These workshops are appropriate for parents, teachers, or individuals who work with young children and focus on practical strategies that can be easily implemented into daily classroom and/or home routines. All of our workshops offer suggestions that are appropriate for all children. A special emphasis is placed on children with special needs and those who may be on the Autism Spectrum. We look forward to seeing you!

Ten Tips for Building Sensory/ Tactile Processing during Circle Time Activities

February 21, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Ten Tips for Building Gross Motor Skills during Circle Time Activities

March 21, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Ten Tips for Building Fine Motor Skills during Circle Time Activities

April 18, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Ten Tips for Building Sensory/ Tactile Processing during Large Group Activities Time Activities

May 16, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Ten Tips for Building Gross Motor Skills into Large Group Activities

June 13, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Workshops are provided for a fee of \$15.00. Payment is collected at the start of class. To register, email your name and list of courses you would like to attend (include dates) to Christine German. You may also register by phone (973) 218-6394 x 10.

HONOR ROLL:

The Staff of Therapy Services
(includes employees and contractors)

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Sherone Lewis	Business Manager
Agnes Siracusa	Administrative Assistant

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Janah Angelou	
Kristen Asencio	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Cheryl Borenstein	
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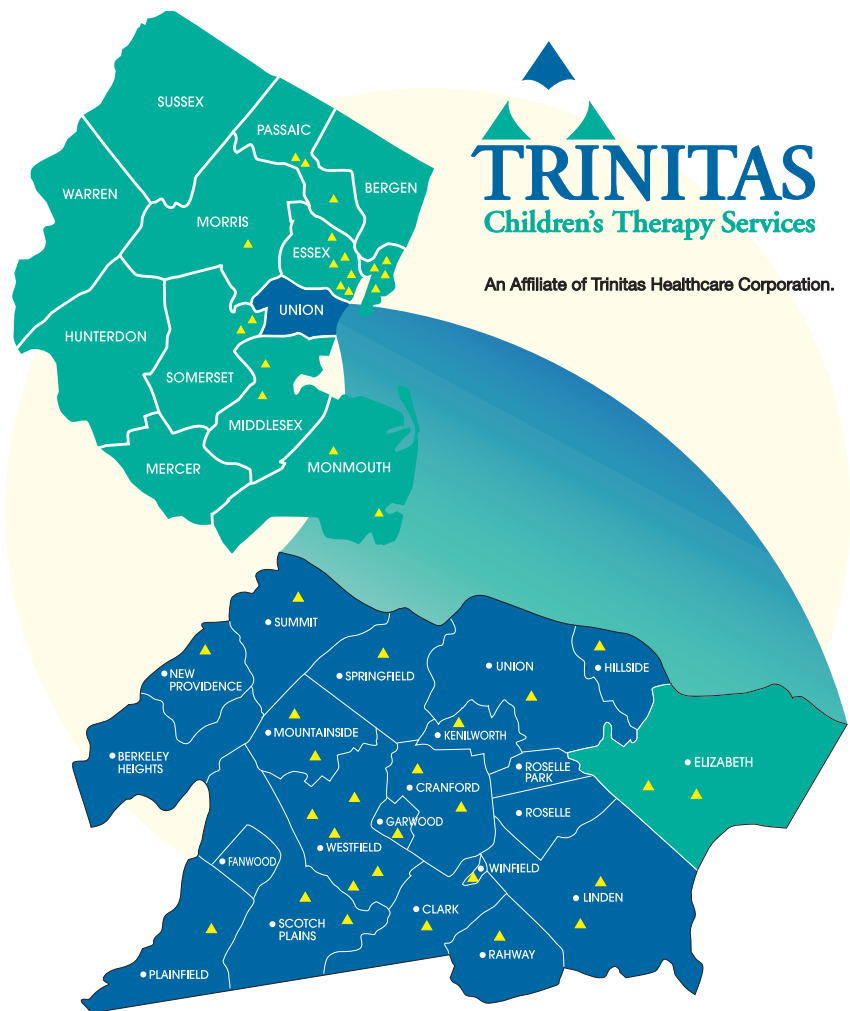
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Jolanda Weinkauff	
Lisa Yuschak	Sr. Physical Therapist
Jackie Zaffarese	

Speech Language Pathologists

Jackelyn Heim
Holli Harlacher
Jillian Utter
Sarah Wyse
Jennie Zemel

Where We Are



▲ Trinitas Children's Therapy Services School,
District & Educational Services Commission Affiliations

Kidmatters

is a publication of Children's Therapy Services, a program of Trinitas Healthcare Corporation. To learn more, call (973) 218-6394, or visit the offices of Trinitas Children's Therapy Services, located at 899 Mountain Avenue, Suite 1A, Springfield, NJ 07081

Visit us at www.ChildTherapyNJ.com or www.TrinitasRMC.org

Trinitas Healthcare Corporation

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