



Kennedy Child Study Center

where every child matters

News & Views

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Fall Benefit Announced

Every year for the past 16 years, Kennedy Child Study Center has hosted its Annual Benefit in the spring. This year, we continue this tradition with a change in seasons.

Our 17th annual celebration will take place on Thursday, October 8, 2009, from 6 PM to 9 PM. And this year, it will be a very special time for we will celebrate completion of the Center's 50th year of extraordinary service.

In announcing the plan for this year, Benefit Chair Michael A. O'Connor expressed the event committee's gratitude to Thomas J. Moran, Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Mutual of America, for making the company's corporate event facilities at its headquarters on Park Avenue and 50th Street available to the agency.

"We are grateful to Mr. Moran and Mutual of America for their generosity for our Golden Anniversary celebration," said Mr. O'Connor. "We are planning a festive cocktail reception, and we look forward to greeting the many friends of the agency who attend the benefit year after year."

If you are not able to attend the event for all of the evening, try to attend for at least part of the time. If this isn't possible, we hope that you will participate by making a donation. All proceeds will support therapeutic services at Kennedy.

In these difficult economic times, it will be uplifting to celebrate together, acknowledge the important work of the Kennedy Child Study Center, and thank this year's generous host, Mutual of America.

Since our founding in 1958, Kennedy has been a preeminent provider of professional services for special needs children and their families. The agency is recognized as a leader in providing assistance to children with special needs, helping them to overcome major developmental challenges that appear early in life.

Through the dedicated efforts of our educators and therapists, the Kennedy Child Study Center enables boys and girls with developmental disabilities to acquire the knowledge and skills that are needed to become independent.



From Peter Gorham, Executive Director

The month of March has truly been the quiet before the storm.

As I write, the Kennedy Child Study Center is operating at capacity enrollment in all of its programs, and there is strong evidence that the demand for our services will remain high for the future.

At the same time, we are awaiting word on State and City funding for the new fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2009. Both funding sources are in the process of finalizing their budgets for next year and we fully expect to feel the consequence of the difficult decisions that they have to make. While we will experience some impact as a result of the economic recession that is affecting everyone, we don't yet know where or how much we can expect in revenue reductions.

Since last summer, KCSC management staff has been doing everything possible to secure the agency's position for the months ahead. Our goal has been to maintain service efforts while controlling expenditures in all programs. We have taken several major actions to ensure our agency's cash flow during what may be periods of payment delay. We are also augmenting our financial planning and reporting processes to emphasize program-level changes in revenues and expenses so that timely action can be taken. Most importantly, we have routinely communicated with all staff members about what is happening and what we think is ahead.

As Clara Miller, the president of the Nonprofit Finance Fund, recently remarked:

"What non-profits do now will have consequences that resonate far beyond the bottom lines of their organizations. The expected economic downturn will pose serious challenges for clients that rely on the services of non-profit, particularly those in low-income communities. With fewer dollars flowing into the sector, non-profits face the possibility of being forced to cut services at a time of increased need."

So it is about the children we serve – as well as the money. If the number of children in need is increasing significantly while government support shows prominent decline, we have the ingredients for a perfect storm.

By the time this issue of our newsletter arrives in your mail box, we most likely will have received word about our funding for next year. Let us hope that there is not a perfect storm in our future, and remain confident that we will weather any temporary downturn that comes our way.

Sincerely,

Peter P. Gorham

Kennedy Staff Present a Webinar on the Outcomes Project

Over the past two years, the Kennedy Child Study Center has been involved in the "Outcomes Project," which uses a software program called *Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)*, to measure the progress of children toward defined service outcomes. The project received major funding through a generous grant from The Heckscher Foundation for Children.



Webinar presenters, wearing Kennedy caps, are (l-r): Joe Spanberger, Director, Information Technology; Joan Dwyer, COO; and Larry Perry, Assistant Executive Director, Manhattan.

The project's aim is to provide the agency with a clearer understanding of which efforts, services, staff, and programs are most effective at achieving desired results and have the greatest impact on the young children we serve. So it was particularly gratifying for all of us at Kennedy when company executives at Social Solutions, the developer of ETO, invited the agency to be the featured presenter in a "webinar," for its current and prospective clients that was held on Thursday, February 26th. A "webinar" is literally web conferencing that is used to conduct live meetings or presentations via the internet.

The presenters were Joan Dwyer, Chief Operating Officer; Laurence Perry, Assistant Executive Director, Manhattan; and Joseph Spanberger, Director of Information Technology.

As Kennedy Child Study Center celebrates its 50 years of service, it continues to be recognized as a model and leader in the field of developmental disabilities. With the establishment of the "Outcomes Project," the Center's internally developed assessment plan, the agency remains on the leading edge in its therapeutic preschool and early intervention programs.

Santa Joins Kennedy Kids for Christmas Celebrations



Festive holiday decorations including wreaths, bells, candy canes and Christmas trees, were visible throughout Kennedy Child Study Center's three locations during the month of December as the entire community waited expectantly for a special visitor: Santa Claus. When the special holiday visitor arrived, a rotund and jolly Saint Nicholas had gifts for each and everyone of the children in our preschool, early intervention and respite programs. HO, HO, HO, echoed in the hallways and in classrooms as the children let loose with squeals of delight.

Presents were generously donated once again by the Verizon-Communications Workers of America, Local 1101, Castle Hill Avenue for our Bronx children, and by Robert Guiccione, Jr. for our Manhattan children. Catholic Charities also donated many gifts. In Manhattan children, staff and some parents walked two doors east to our local firehouse where they enjoyed a holiday party, while firemen sang Christmas carols, and served ice cream and cookies. The boys and girls got to meet the fire department's traditional mascot: a life-size dalmatian, expertly played by one of the firemen.



Using the TEACCH Approach at Kennedy

TEACCH stands for the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children.

The TEACCH approach is an evidence-based service, training, and research program for individuals of all ages and skill levels with autism spectrum disorders.

Established in the early 1970s at the University of North Carolina, TEACCH has been in use with thousands of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families.

Last summer, members of our teaching staff attended a TEACCH training workshop to learn more about the program. The result has been to make use of those aspects of the TEACCH approach that can be relevant to children attending Kennedy programs.

Long-term goals of TEACCH include skill development and fulfillment of fundamental

human needs such as dignity, engagement in productive and personally meaningful activities, and feelings of security, self-efficacy, and self-confidence.

TEACCH calls for developing an individualized person- and family-centered plan for each student, rather than using a standard curriculum. This approach has always been a key component of the Kennedy Child Study Center educational philosophy. The goal for all children in our preschool and early intervention programs is to enable the students to function as meaningfully and as independently as possible in the community.

Within the walls of the Kennedy Child Study Center's classrooms,



our therapists, teachers and teaching assistants help children pay attention to details; organize ideas; communicate ideas verbally; understand that concepts have a beginning, a middle, and an end; and use visual clues to make predictions and understand meaning.

This approach can be used in all classrooms, including music, art, PE, and speech/language and occupational therapy sessions, as well as in the cafeteria, school bus, and playground.

Services based on the TEACCH approach are now used with individuals from early childhood through adulthood in a variety of settings, including early intervention programs; public and private school classrooms; families' homes, residential programs, and private housing; play and other social groups; summer camps and other recreation programs; individual and group counseling sessions; and both competitive and sheltered employment sites.

For more information about the TEACCH approach, go to www.teacch.com.

The Therapeutic Preschool Program

One of our primary programs is the therapeutic preschool for children, three to five years old, who have a developmental disability. Using developmentally appropriate curricula and providing hands-on activities, our goal for all children is to develop and refine skills in the areas of play, movement, socialization, language, and self-help.

Preschool lays the foundation for lifelong learning. Children enter at varying stages of development, so instruction recognizes and expands children's interests, strengths, and abilities. Classes focus on:

- Social and emotional development to foster a sense of self, enhance ability to make friends, and create openness to learning;
- Physical development to strengthen large and small muscles, coordinate movement, and improve overall health and growth;
- Creative expression and aesthetic development to foster a child's appreciation for the arts — music, movement, dramatic play, and the visual arts;
- Cognitive development to promote intellectual growth and school success. When children use their language, literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, and social studies cognitive skills to think, problem solve, and communicate, they are making sense of their world.

The preschool program incorporates health, nutrition, social services, and parent and community involvement. In collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), preschool students receive a vision screening early in the school year to detect visual acuity problems before they impact learning.

Some of specialized programs at Kennedy include *Breakthrough to Literacy*™ and *SPARK*™ (Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids), a program which provides children with physical fitness activities that are structured and developmentally appropriate.



Occupational & Physical Therapies

Occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) are treatments that focus on helping people, young and old, achieve independence in all areas of their lives. The goal of both these therapies is to enable people with physical limitations or impairments to participate to their fullest in everyday life.

Occupational therapy focuses on the underlying components of development, promoting improvement in sensory processing, gross motor, fine motor, and functional skills. Sensory integration improves the child's ability to interpret and organize information from the senses, and remedies many of the eating, sleeping and dressing difficulties, as well as handwriting, behavior, and physical problems associated with sensory integration dysfunction.

Physical therapy benefits children by improving coordination, balance, tone and core strength. Early identification and treatment of these issues can impact future success in areas such as handwriting, sports, behavior and learning. Physical therapists deal with issues of pain and range of motion; improving balance, coordination and strength; and increasing endurance and gross motor skills.

Generally, pediatric physical therapists use a child's work or "play" to enhance their gross motor skills. They work closely with the occupational therapists and speech-language therapists to provide a holistic approach for children of all ages and abilities. The earlier a child is identified and receives intervention the better the functional outcome.

For the children at Kennedy, OT/PT is an important component of their therapeutic program, which is supervised by Tristan Dulangon, in Manhattan, and Jenny Ramoutar, in the Bronx.

Currently, close to 40% of the boys and girls at Kennedy receive PT and nearly 60% receive OT.



Photo left: Manhattan OT/PT Supervisor Tristan Dulangon works with a preschool boy to engage trunk and scapular muscles while using a resistance toy to throw and catch a ball.

Photo right: Bronx OT/PT Supervisor Jenny Ramoutar works with a boy in early intervention on eye hand coordination and strengthening small muscles, while also trying to have him use both hands together which is necessary later on for handwriting.

Among the children who may benefit from OT/PT are children with:

- birth injuries or birth defects
- sensory processing/integrative disorders
- traumatic injuries (brain or spinal cord)
- learning problems
- autism
- developmental delays
- spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and other chronic illnesses
- torticollis or limited neck motion
- sensory integration dysfunction

*Honor a friend,
a family member
or a colleague.*

*Make a gift to the
Kennedy Child Study Center
in their name.*

*It's the perfect way to recognize
a special occasion
or to
remember a loved one.*



The "formal" opening of the new Bronx site took place in the fall, on September 4, 2008. Pictured (l-r): Peter Gorham, Executive Director; John Gibbons, Kennedy Board Member; Joseph Becker, Agency Relations Liaison, Catholic Charities; and Lawrence McGovern, Co-Chair, Kennedy Board.

Other guests included Catherine Lenihan, KCSC Board Member; Jesse Mojica, Director, Education Policy and Youth Services, Bronx Borough President's Office; William Lopez, Assistant Commissioner, and Harris Epstein, Director of Contracts, both with OMRDD, NYC DOH; Sara Logan, Community Board #6; and Linda Cox, Executive Director, Bronx River Alliance. Also present were teaching staff and parents of children attending the preschool program at the site.

Photo by Tina Buckman

Dr. Pola Rosen Joins the Kennedy Board of Directors



Dr. Pola Rosen is the founder and publisher of *Education Update*, an award-winning monthly free newspaper that deals with issues, people and events in education from preschool to graduate school. Dr. Rosen's background is in education, with an emphasis on special education. Over the past two years, she has visited the Kennedy Child Study Center several times, and *Education Update* has published two articles about the Center. In February, 16 members of the agency's teaching staff attended *Education Update's* Annual Conference on Special Education (see article below)

Education Update, which began in 1995, reaches 100,000 readers, including teachers, public school principals and heads of independent schools, school superintendents, members of the Board of Regents, college presidents, education school and medical school deans, members of the New York City Council, parents, and students in high school and college. It currently maintains its office at Hunter College, a neighbor of Kennedy Child Study Center's Manhattan location. It receives some two million monthly hits on its website, www.EducationUpdate.com.

Born in Argentina, Dr. Rosen holds a Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) in Special Education and a Masters of Arts (MA) in Education Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University. She earned her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Barnard College after which she attended New York University School of Law for two years.

Dr. Rosen remains very much involved with her undergraduate alma mater, Barnard College, where she serves as Chair of the Project Continuum and as a Director at Large of the Associate Alumnae organization. She is

on the Teachers College Advisory Council; New York Botanical Gardens Advisory Council; and City College of New York School of Education Advisory Council. Dr. Rosen also serves on the Board of Directors of the UN/USA Council.

The Kennedy Child Study Center welcomes Dr. Rosen to its Board. Her expertise in special education will be a great asset to the Center's community.

Kennedy Teachers Attend Special Education Conference

At the end of February on a cold Saturday morning, 16 members of the agency's teaching staff rose early to attend a special education conference that focused on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, and Assistive Technology at Hunter College.

The conference was presented by *Education Update* in collaboration with Hunter College, New York University Steinhardt School of Education, New York University Child Study Center, Teachers College of Columbia University, McCarton School, and New York City Department of Education District 75.

The main focus of the conference was on the latest technology and techniques, and research and practical applications for Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

The following points were excerpted from notes taken by Meenu Suneja, a teaching assistant

who attended the conference.

- Autism can be recognized as early as two years of age, and is prominent between two and nine years of age.
- Children with behavioral disorders need special programs that emphasize Applied Behavioral Analysis, which focuses on language, social and motor skills, and, most important, behavior.
- Many advanced technologies that are specially designed for autistic children can help to improve speech and motor skills.
- Mobile phones and touch screen monitors, in which children drag and drop the cursor instead of writing, are some of the new technologies available to help children with ASD.
- Special speech recognition devices are also available to help children with writing.

- Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) need to learn self control and self regulation.

- The Director of the Langone Medical Center at NYU stated that medication improves symptoms in about 70% of people with ADHD.

- A primary goal for all children with Autism Spectrum Disorders is to use innovative approaches with whatever instructional material are available so that the children can become independent.

The overwhelming consensus of the attendees was that the conference provided a wonderful opportunity to learn and expand on their knowledge in the field of special education. They are excited about putting what they learned into use in their classrooms.

SAVE THE DATE!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2009

6-9 PM

CELEBRATING KENNEDY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HOSTED BY

MUTUAL OF AMERICA, 320 PARK AVENUE, 35TH FLOOR

Information & Resources for Parents, Families and Caregivers

INFORMATION

What is a developmental delay?

A developmental delay is a term used to describe when an infant or very young child exhibits slow development in one or more areas.

What is a developmental disability?

A developmental disability is a chronic disability that begins before a child's 22nd birthday and is expected to continue indefinitely. It is diagnosed by a physician and caused by a condition such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neurological impairment or autism.

Do all developmental delays progress into developmental disabilities?

No, not all developmental delays become developmental disabilities. However, it's important to address a young child's developmental delays at the earliest possible time in their life when there's a better chance that he or she will gain the skills to overcome any initial delays.

When should a parent or caregiver seek help?

If you believe that your child is not developing in the same way or with the same regularity as most children of the same age, you should discuss your concerns with the child's pediatrician.

What are early intervention services?

Early intervention services is provided to eligible infants, toddlers and their families. These services identify and meet a child's developmental needs in the following areas:

- Physical and cognitive development
- Communication
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development

How does a parent or caregiver access early intervention services?

Infants and toddlers up through age two can be referred to the New York City Early Intervention Program by their doctors, child care agencies, and other social service providers.

What is a preschool special education program?

This program of educational and therapeutic services is expressly designed to meet the needs children, ages three to five, diagnosed with a developmental disability or significant developmental delay.

How does a parent or caregiver gain access to a preschool special education program?

Any child may be referred to the New York City Department of Education's Regional Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Referrals can come from an early intervention program, a preschool, a physician or parent.

RESOURCES

For Information on Specific Conditions

MEDLINEplus Health Information
Special Parents Information Network
Internet Resource Directory for Special Children
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
The Arc of the United States (ARC)
National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)
The Autism Society of America
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy

Disability Organizations Online

The Arc of the United States
National Down Syndrome Society
United Cerebral Palsy



The Autism Society of America
The Council for Exceptional Children

Government Resources Available Online

National Resources

The Federal Web Site
The President of the United States
The United States Senate
The United States House of Representatives
Social Security Administration

Resources in New York State

New York State Web Site
The Governor of New York
The New York State Assembly
The New York State Senate
NYS Dept. of Education: Special Education
NYS Dept. of Health: Early Intervention
NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Resources in New York City

New York City Web Site
The Mayor of the City of New York



The Public Advocate
The City Council
NYC Department of Education
NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene

Special Education Resources

Internet Links for Preschool Special Education
Special Education Resources on the Internet
Council for Exceptional Children
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
Acronyms Frequently Used in Special Education
Resources for Parents, Siblings and Families
Finding Help for Young Children with Disabilities (Birth - 5)
Zero to Three
Family Village
The Sibling Support Project
Beach Center on Disability
Special Child Magazine
National Fathers Network

Parents Helping Parents Resource Directory
Disability Resources on the Internet
Our Kids: Raising Special Kids with Special Needs

Toys and Games

Able Play
do2learn

Assistive Technology

Alliance for Technology Access
Ability Hub
Different Roads to Learning

Information on Policy and Legislation

The Arc of the United States
National Organization on Disability
Connect for Kids
Family Resource Guide to Policies, Services and Programs in New York State

Other Resources

Welcome to Holland
Future Planning for Children with Disabilities

WHEN YOU MAKE A PERSONAL GIFT TO KENNEDY, you will make a difference in the lives of some very young children with developmental challenges and related disabilities. There are many ways you can to help:

- **Donate Cash** Writing a check is the simplest way to make a gift to the Center. Make your check payable to Kennedy Child Study Center. Or, if you prefer, make a credit card contribution; we accept Visa and Mastercard.
- **Have Your Company Match Your Gift** You can double or triple the size of your gift if you work for a matching gift company. Please check with your HR office where you are employed.
- **Donate Securities** Gifts of appreciated securities are always welcome and may offer you significant tax advantages.
- **Remember Kennedy in Your Estate Plans** Make a provision in your will for a cash bequest, a gift of real estate or property, an insurance policy, or name KCSC as a direct beneficiary of a portion of your retirement resources.

For more information, please call us at 212-988-9500 for how to contribute to Kennedy Child Study Center. As with any legal or financial matter, it is advisable to seek the counsel of a legal or financial advisor.

News and Views is a publication of the Kennedy Child Study Center. Peter P. Gorham, Executive Director; Sari Anthony, Editor, Director of Development and Communications. Gutenberg Printing. Photography: Sari Anthony, Tina Buckman, Rita Leo, Jose Mateo, Katie Prince, Joseph Spanberger.

Please consider how your gift will help:

- \$100 will provide a destitute family with a special meal during the Easter season
- \$250 will provide a developmental screening for a young victim of child abuse or purchase winter coats for a needy KCSC preschooler
- \$350 will help a family without medical coverage receive psychological services
- \$500 will pay for staff training in specialized areas of need, such as autism
- \$1,000 will help a family without medical coverage pay for a comprehensive clinical evaluation by a first-rate team that includes a pediatrician, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, and speech, physical and occupational therapists



In this difficult economic time, the Kennedy Child Study Center needs your support more than ever. With your help, we can ensure bright futures for the children enrolled in the agency's programs. We want to continue to provide the very best services available.

Save the Date ...
Thursday, October 8, 2009
6-9PM
Annual Benefit
Celebrating 50 Years of
Extraordinary Service!

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