

# the Achiever



## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

**a**daja Jackson, a very sweet and hardworking little girl, has overcome many obstacles in her five years of life. Adaja was born almost four months early with severe lung disease, Cerebral Palsy, and a need for a tracheotomy to help her breathe. Before coming to the Achievement Centers for Children two and a half years ago, Adaja was not able to crawl, feed herself, speak, or walk.



However, things changed for Adaja after only a few months of speech, physical, and occupational therapy at the Achievement Centers for Children.

Adaja's father, Greg Jackson, recalls that it didn't take Adaja very long to begin speaking after she started speech therapy at the Achievement Centers because she is such a quick and eager learner. Adaja also learned to feed and dress herself, and began to read and write. Adaja wears braces on her legs for balance and has progressed from a walker to forearm crutches when she is walking at school and in the community. Only two months ago, she walked independently! Adaja's first steps without the assistance of her walker or crutches were huge accomplishments for her, her parents, and her therapists, Heather McFarland, Karla Reese, and Heather Hill. They were so excited that she walked alone that Adaja and her physical therapist announced her success over the intercom system at the agency to share her accomplishment with our entire staff.

Everyone at the Achievement Centers was so thrilled for Adaja and her family that cheers erupted from the hallways. She is loved by our staff and she gives back to everyone with the biggest hugs.

"The Achievement Centers for Children was one of the best things that we did for Adaja," says Tiffany Jackson, Adaja's mom. "The therapists are very creative and have exceeded our expectations." Currently, Adaja receives occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy weekly to build

independence with motor skills and language. Therapies include activities such as using a scooter board, a swing, and wheelbarrow walking (walking on arms with a therapist holding her legs) to climbing the Discovery Wall, learning to ride a tricycle, playing a sentence fishing game, and reading books. These activities are only a few examples of the creative ways that the therapists engage Adaja. The therapists and her parents are hoping to get Adaja into Hippotherapy at the Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful. Hippotherapy uses the movement of a horse in physical and occupational therapy sessions to achieve functional outcomes.

According to her parents, Adaja is a very determined and motivated young lady. "When she falls, she does not ask for help, but continues to try and stand up by herself," says Greg. "We are all very proud of her and know she will continue to excel."



## Message from the Executive Director

Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA



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216-292-9700

Visit our website  
[www.achievementcenters.org](http://www.achievementcenters.org)

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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN,

With summer gone and fall in full swing, I look back on what was a very challenging yet exciting year for the Achievement Centers for Children. We completed a very successful capital campaign, exceeding our \$8.5 million goal with the assistance of a challenge grant from the 1525 Foundation. Camp programs had a record-breaking number of campers at our Camp Cheerful site and Highland Hills site. Not only are more individuals using our camp services, but we are expanding the kinds of camp programs as well. The new Hippotherapy and Therapeutic Riding programs kicked off in September and have been very well received. We have also expanded our autism programs beyond our preschool classrooms to include kindergarten through second grade.

In addition, we are particularly proud to have obtained a three year CARF accreditation and to have been chosen to partner with Community Wealth Ventures, a Washington D.C. organization. You will read about these two highlights within the newsletter. We could not accomplish these successes, as well as others, without the exceptional support from our generous community, excellent staff, active Board of Directors, and dedicated volunteers. With that ongoing support, the Achievement Centers for Children can carry out its mission and continue to do what is most important—helping children with disabilities and their families be the best that they can be. I hope you enjoy reading more about the wonderful things that are happening within our agency.

Sincerely,



Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA  
Executive Director



**ACCREDITATION and LICENSURE** The Achievement Centers for Children's programs and services are licensed and accredited by many entities, including:

American Camping Association

Ohio Department of Mental Health

Certified Medicaid Provider

Member, Cuyahoga County Early Intervention Collaborative

Ohio Department of Education

Numerous agreements with area universities and colleges

Ohio Department of Health

Ohio Department of Human Services

CARF Accreditation

Ohio Department of MR/DD

Pat and Beatrice Catanzarite

when they first met in 1946,

and on their 50th wedding

anniversary in 1997.



## GIVING WITH GRACE

David and Susan Catanzarite's daughter, Torie, has Down syndrome. "When you are the parent of a child with special needs," says David, "so much is demanded of you. We were blessed with the means to provide for what Torie needed. Some parents are not as blessed as we are. This is why we feel so strongly about supporting the Achievement Centers for Children."

When his parents, Pat and Beatrice Catanzarite, passed away in 2003, David and his siblings, Michael, Sharon, and Patrice, formed the Catanzarite Family Foundation, to honor their parents' memory and continue their tradition of giving to others. "My mother and father were always willing to help anyone in need," says David.

One of the reasons that the Catanzarites became supporters of the Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful was because David's daughter, Torie, has an affinity for horses, and Camp Cheerful has a barn and several horses. David noticed that Torie benefited greatly from her experiences with horses, building her self-esteem in particular.

Recently, when the Achievement Centers needed to make improvements to the barn facilities at Camp Cheerful, the Catanzarite Family Foundation made a significant gift. This year when we were

exploring adding a new Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy program at Camp, the Catanzarites stepped up again, generously providing the \$120,000 needed to launch the program.

In recognition of the vital difference this family has made in the lives of children with disabilities and their families, we have placed a sign in the indoor riding arena. The sign reads, "In memory of Beatrice Catan and her love of children. If you judge people you have no time to love them."

"Growing up, we always thought that with all we've been given we should give back. Besides, it is a lot more fun to give than to get," says David. Now David tries to pass on the importance of giving to his own children. He feels the strongest lesson he can teach them is to live by example.

We thank the Catanzarite family for their generosity and support. The Achievement Centers' exciting growth would not be possible without these kinds of special friends.

If you are interested in supporting the new Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy program at Camp Cheerful, please call Achievement Centers for Children's Director of Development, Deborah Osgood at 216-292-9700 ext. 224. ●



# Achievement Centers' Manager Receives Award

**B**ARB OBIAYA, Manager of Family Support Services at the Achievement Centers for Children, was awarded the 2005 Carolyn Grossman Award for Extraordinary Commitment to Families and Children from the Heights Parent Center on July 30 at "A Night at Cain Park" benefit in Cleveland Heights. The Carolyn Grossman Award recognizes an individual in the Cleveland community who demonstrates extraordinary commitment to the growth and success of children and their families. The Carolyn Grossman award was established in 2003 by Carolyn Grossman's children in her honor. A long-time Kindergarten teacher and founder of the Heights Parent Center, Carolyn helped establish the comprehensive Parent Center to educate and provide support to parents, so they could help their children be successful in school.

Barb has been working with children and families in Northeast Ohio for 30 years. She started her career at the Achievement Centers for Children as a social worker in 1976 and now ably fills her current role as Manager of Family Support Services. Barb is a very dedicated member of the Achievement Centers' staff, and is a strong and committed advocate for children and their families. Congratulations, Barb!

## NEW AUTISM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

The Autism programs at the Achievement Centers for Children have been expanded to include a newly equipped kindergarten through second grade classroom at our Highland Hills location. The classroom is a response to the increase in young children diagnosed with autism and was developed in collaboration with the Educational Service Center.

This public school option is designed to assist students on the autism spectrum who need additional time developing the necessary skills to successfully transition back to their home school district. The classroom incorporates the Ohio Department of Education Academic Content Standards with specific interventions based on TEACCH, PECS, Floortime (DIR), Music Therapy, ABA, Sensory Integration, and Positive Behavioral Supports. The K-2 classroom interdisciplinary team is comprised of a lead teacher, two educational aides, as well as occupational, speech and music therapists. Our Parent Educator serves as a consultant to the team and families. The new classroom offers a comprehensive educational program for up to 10 students with autism.

Please contact your local school district if you are interested in enrolling your child in the Achievement Centers' kindergarten through second grade classroom. For more information on the Autism programs at the Achievement Centers for Children, please call Mary Beth Koss at 216-292-9700, ext. 243.



*Barb Obiaya receives the 2005*

*Carolyn Grossman Award from the*

*Heights Parent Center.*

## "THE FIRST YEARS LAST FOREVER"

**O**n Sunday, September 18 at 7 P.M., the premiere of *The First Years Last Forever, What Works for Young Children in Northeast Ohio* television special aired on WKYC Channel 3. The special included Kristine Snell, Achievement Centers for Children social worker, and highlighted a family with young children who receive mental health services at the Achievement Centers. The special was produced by WKYC in partnership with the Center for Families and Children, KidsOhio.org, and Voices for Children of Greater Cleveland. Channel 3 anchor Romona Robinson and reporters Dick Russ and Kim Wheeler hosted the special and shared with viewers how the Northeast Ohio region is home to programs that help young children succeed. These programs model best practices for child-serving organizations in our area and across the country.

If you missed the special on September 18, there will be another opportunity to see it on Sunday November 27 at 7 P.M. on WKYC Channel 3. Or you can request a DVD of the special by emailing [info@voicesforlevelandschildren.org](mailto:info@voicesforlevelandschildren.org).

## Achievement Centers for Children Special Events



### *Runners and Walkers Enjoy Another Successful Most Excellent Race*

The 15th annual *A Most Excellent Race* took place on Sunday, June 26, 2005 at Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights. More than 500 runners and walkers participated in this year's race raising more than \$70,000 for the Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful. The race featured a 5K Run, 10K Run, 5K Fun Walk, 10K Wheelchair Competition, and the Camp Cheerful Classic, a 100-yard dash by the children who attend camp. Awards were given to the top three finishers in each division. Outstanding supporters Stan and Karen Thomas took home the Friends/Family Walk Team fundraising award and Edgepark Surgical was awarded the Top Corporate Walk Team for the first time.



### *Blue Chip Blue Tee*

The 21st annual *Blue Chip Blue Tee* Golf Tournament raised over \$71,000 for the Achievement Centers for Children and was held Monday, August 1, 2005 at the Kirtland Country Club in Willoughby. Co-Chairs of the event, Jim Streicher and Gordon Harnett, along with a Blue Chip Blue Tee Committee, gathered golfers and important fundraising dollars to create a successful golf tournament.

## A WELL-DESERVED ACCREDITATION

**T**he Achievement Centers for Children received a new accreditation in June. Two professionals from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) conducted a comprehensive on-site survey at the Achievement Centers in May to determine the degree to which our organization meets the rigorous CARF standards for service and quality. The Achievement Centers was awarded a three-year accreditation, which is the highest possible CARF Accreditation Survey outcome. CARF is an accrediting organization whose purpose is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served. This accreditation recognizes that the Achievement Centers provides excellent, high quality mental health services for children and their families in Cuyahoga County.



## Different Ways to Give

- **HAVE YOU BEEN SEARCHING** for just the right gift—one with special meaning? Then consider making a donation to the Achievement Centers for Children in honor of or in memory of a friend or family member. Your contribution directly benefits the children and their families served at the Achievement Centers for Children. You can mail your contribution to the Achievement Centers and a special acknowledgement letter will be mailed to the person being honored. For more information, please call Deborah Osgood, Director of Development, at 216-292-9700, ext. 224.
- **ANOTHER UNIQUE WAY** that you can help the Achievement Centers for Children is through a website called [whatgoesaround.org](http://whatgoesaround.org). Whatgoesaround.org is a website where you can register a “GiveList” for the Achievement Centers as well as any public charity in the United States. That means that your friends and family can visit [whatgoesaround.org](http://whatgoesaround.org) and look up your name and make a contribution to the Achievement Centers in your honor or anytime they want to say “Happy Birthday,” “Congratulations,” or “Happy Holidays.” Whatgoesaround.org is a non-profit venture created by a team of people who were interested in creating something that would benefit charities throughout the country. It’s very easy to register on this website and there is no cost to you. To get started, visit [www.whatgoesaround.org](http://www.whatgoesaround.org).

## COMMUNITY WEALTH VENTURES OPENS DOORS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN

**T**he Achievement Centers for Children is one of eight organizations selected to participate in the Cleveland Community Wealth Ventures Collaborative, a project funded by The Cleveland Foundation that helps non-profits start mission-related businesses that can provide a source of income for the organization. Nearly 30 non-profit organizations applied to be part of this Collaborative. Eight finalists were chosen after an extensive screening process, including a written application, site visits at the organizations, and presentations from the organizations. A selection team, which consisted of Cleveland business executives and representatives from The Cleveland Foundation and Community Wealth Ventures (CMV), had strict



*The Achievement Centers for Children  
is honored to be part of this Collaboration.*

*It is a wonderful opportunity.*



criteria for choosing the final participants: 1) the non-profit has a business venture under way or has done considerable research toward developing such a business venture, 2) the non-profit has strong board and staff leadership, 3) the non-profit is in solid financial condition, 4) the non-profit is willing to take calculated risks to build its financial base, and finally, 5) that the chosen business venture advances the organization’s mission.

The other seven organizations that were selected to participate in the Cleveland Community Wealth Collaborative are the Alzheimer’s Association Cleveland Area Chapter, Center for Families and Children, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association, International Partners in Mission, Recovery Resources, and Vocational Guidance Services.

Community Wealth Ventures is a consulting firm located in Washington D.C. that was created to assist non-profits in generating new revenues through business ventures. The Cleveland Foundation is working in partnership with Community Wealth Ventures to provide a 10-month training program for the eight chosen organizations to help them create and grow successful businesses. The Achievement Centers for Children’s business venture will be autism consultation services to public school districts in the venue of program development, consultation around an individual student/classroom, paraprofessional training, and training for regular education teachers.

The Achievement Centers for Children is honored to be a part of this Collaboration. It is a wonderful opportunity for the agency and for the children and families that we serve. As adequate funding for non-profit organizations becomes more challenging to obtain, this opportunity with Community Wealth Ventures will help the Achievement Centers continue to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families in the Greater Cleveland community.

# Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy Comes to Camp Cheerful

The Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy Programs at the Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful in Strongsville started serving their first clients in early September thanks to the Catanzarite Family. The Catanzarites contributed \$120,000 to launch the new Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy programs, which provide safe, therapeutic, and educational horsemanship lessons year-round for children and adults with special needs.

The Therapeutic Riding program is offered one day a week for 10 weeks and is an individualized and fun horsemanship program for children and adults with disabilities. Certified instructors at Camp Cheerful teach the individual to ride a horse while taking into account their physical, mental and emotional strengths and limitations.

Hippotherapy differs from Therapeutic Riding in that the client is specially positioned on the horse and actively responds to the movement of the horse while engaging in activities



that are both enjoyable and challenging. Our certified North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) instructors and physical and occupational therapists use gentle horses to assist people with disabilities in achieving a variety of therapeutic benefits, including posture, balance, coordination, and joint mobility. The therapist directs the movement of the horse and analyzes the client's response. There are eight occupational therapy sessions and eight physical therapy sessions offered per week within the Hippotherapy Program. The Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful Hippotherapy Program is one of only three Hippotherapy programs in Northeast Ohio.

The Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy programs are a wonderful addition to Camp Cheerful's growing recreation and therapy services. If you are interested in participating or volunteering in either of these programs, please call Camp Cheerful at 440-238-6200.

*Achievement Centers' certified therapists work with children during Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy sessions*



## ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN

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### About the ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN

Founded in 1940 as the Society for Crippled Children, the Achievement Centers for Children provides a wide variety of rehabilitation, recreation, education and family support services for children with disabilities and their families. We serve over 3,000 children with disabilities and their families each year.

Our mission is to join with children with disabilities and their families to strengthen abilities and create opportunities for lifelong participation in all aspects of society.

*The Achiever* is published by the Development Department of the Achievement Centers for Children.

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## ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN

### Services by Location

*The Achievement Centers provides services through a variety of locations, including schools, day cares, homes, and at the Achievement Centers' three facilities. The following is a list of services according to location.*

#### On-going Home visiting (offices at the Highland Hills location)

Early childhood mental health counseling; Early intervention program for children ages birth to three with special needs; Early Start home-visiting services for at-risk children, ages birth to three; Day Care Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

#### East/Highland Hills

Child Development Center day care for children with and without special needs; Preschool for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; Kindergarten through second grade for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; Social work and counseling; Physical, speech and occupational therapy; Champ Camp (summer day camp program); Parent support groups

#### West/Lakewood

Preschool for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; Social work and counseling; Physical, speech and occupational therapy; Parent support groups

#### South/Strongsville/Camp Cheerful

Social work and counseling; Physical, speech and occupational therapy; Recreational Activities; Residential and day camp programs; Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy