



# the Achiever

## Camp Cheerful: Naturally Nurturing

Just as mighty oaks grow from little acorns when given the opportunity and nutrients they need to grow, our Camp Cheerful offers the perfect combination of nature and nurturing for children with disabilities to learn and grow through traditional camp activities designed to enrich each individual's abilities.

Nestled in 52 acres of the Cleveland Metroparks, Achievement Centers' Camp Cheerful offers a barrier free, natural outdoor environment. Exceptional staff and programs provide an ideal, safe setting for campers of all ages to try new activities, learn new skills and make new friends. Campers take home experiences to share and memories that last a lifetime, and they develop friendships that grow year after year. Read about Albert and Rachel, two of the over 1,500 campers each year whose lives have been enriched through their experiences at Camp Cheerful.

### ALBERT

Albert was a shy and quiet boy who preferred staying inside, watching TV and playing games. Having been diagnosed with Down syndrome and autism, Albert had difficulty speaking and expressing himself. Last spring, the Waters family attended an Open House at Camp Cheerful, where they found a place where Albert could "come alive."

Albert, 13 years old, attended Camp Cheerful's day camp last summer, where he especially enjoyed fishing, canoeing and horseback riding. He brought home a little dirt on his clothes and a smile on his face from a full day in the sunshine with his friends at camp. He couldn't wait to tell his family about his day. His mother is so happy that his communication skills improved, and that he even initiates more conversations now. His parents appreciated the daily feedback from his camp counselors who told them about their son's day, his activities and accomplishments, and his progress toward his goals.



*Our caring counselors understand that many children with autism, such as Albert, have difficulty communicating their thoughts and emotions through words and facial expressions.*

During the rest of the year, Albert swims in our adapted aquatics program, and plays football, baseball and soccer in our adapted sports program. Albert's mother says the adapted sports program was "just a godsend for Albert." She has seen his confidence build, and he has become more physically fit while having fun being more active. He has many friends, and takes great pride in being a part of the sports teams. Albert's parents are appreciative for the many opportunities at the Achievement Centers that have allowed Albert to blossom.

*Camp Cheerful story continues inside . . .*

*Players learn new skills and confidence through the individual care of our volunteer coaches.*



*Albert's mother says the adapted sports program was "just a godsend for Albert."*



Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA  
President & CEO



## CHARITY NAVIGATOR 4 STAR RATING

Exciting news! Non-profit evaluator, Charity Navigator, has awarded the Achievement Centers for Children their highest rating of "4 Stars." Charity Navigator bases its ratings on non-profits' financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency. Only approximately one-quarter of the charities evaluated nationally receive this "exceptional" designation from Charity Navigator. To view our profile and write a review, visit [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).



## Dear Friends,

When speaking to various groups, I sometimes say that when we first see a child with a disability, we can be blinded by the disability. By that I mean that we sometimes only see the disability and forget to look beyond to see the entire, multifaceted child. A child with a disability will always be a child first. And as do all children, they have unique personalities, and likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses and on and on. But something all children need and want, is to do things they enjoy and to have fun! And all children like to discover activities that they can do well and feel good about their accomplishments.

When a child has a disability, there can be many barriers to experiencing some of these things. Many of the activities and opportunities that some of us took for granted as children, such as playing sports, swimming, or doing something special that you can brag about at school, can be more challenging to find if you have a disability.

Enter the Achievement Centers for Children and an array of opportunities to assist. These include adapted sports, therapeutic horseback riding, adapted aquatics, an accessible high ropes course, and our wonderful totally accessible Camp Cheerful located on 52 acres in the Cleveland Metroparks. One camper said that when he comes to Camp Cheerful it is like taking a vacation from his disability. Another said Camp Cheerful is a "bio-dome of fun." One of our junior wheelchair basketball players was able to show off his great athletic skill, obtaining a scholarship to college and an opportunity to play on the college's adult wheelchair team that travels all over the United States.

So as we assist children with disabilities and their families in being all they that they can be, through therapies, family support, education, recreation and other varied and specialized programs, let us never forget the importance of having opportunities to be just a child. And may we all remember that a child with a disability is not so different than any other child in their ultimate wishes and desires — to have friends and fun, to do something well, to feel proud of their accomplishments, to learn, . . . and experience the life of a child.

Thank you for helping a child with a disability be a child first!

Patricia Nobili, MSSA  
President & CEO

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## Camp Cheerful, continued



### RACHEL

Rachel, also 13 years old, lives to ride her favorite horse, Ridge, in our Therapeutic Horseback Riding program at Camp Cheerful. At just six months of age, Rachel contracted

a virus that caused paralysis from her waist down. Because our riding program offers a wheelchair lift, and a special harness that straps her legs securely in place, she has been able to experience horseback riding, develop her riding skills and has found a real passion for horses. Since Rachel has leg braces and it takes time for her muscles to relax, her instructor chose a bareback pad that allows her legs to stretch out to the maximum. Physical exercises and educational activities are woven into the riding lessons, providing therapeutic benefits. All of our instructors are certified and registered by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.).

Rachel's balance, strength and posture have improved throughout the years, and according to one of her instructors, "She developed very sensitive 'hands,' which allowed her to use a bridle on her horse and command him independently." Today Rachel is able to ride without the assistance of 'sidewalkers.' "Her confident, and relaxed but skillful handling of her horse is a joy to watch," her instructor added. But, her mother related that it's not just the physical improvements that are so very important for Rachel. It gives her a real sense of pride, feeling of accomplishment, and has earned her bragging rights with her friends.

Rachel recently participated in the Chagrin Valley Hunter Jumper Classic with other riders from the Achievement Centers, and earned first place in her category. Horseback riding is such an important part of her life, that she postponed surgery on her back until after the show so she could participate. She has been riding in Camp Cheerful's Therapeutic Horseback Riding program since it started six years ago. When Rachel is riding, she takes a break from her disability, and can experience what other children do — meeting challenges and learning to achieve goals, making friends, and simply having fun.



*Rachel's expert horsemanship skills earned her first place in the Riders with Disabilities Competition, and is pictured above with our volunteers at the event.*



### COME TO CAMP!

#### At Camp Cheerful in Strongsville

- Day and Residential Camps
- Weekend Respite Camp
  - Teen Camp
- Sensational Day Camp— for school-aged children on the autism spectrum
- Therapeutic Horsemanship activities included in all weekly camp programs
- Swimming, arts and crafts, nature, sensory, and sports activities
- High Ropes Climbing Tower
  - Field Trips
- IO Waiver and Level 1 Waiver funding
- Scholarships available

#### At Westlake and Highland Hills Locations:

- Day Camp
- Teen Day Camp

### VISIT

[www.achievementcenters.org](http://www.achievementcenters.org)

For information, registration packet and online registration





## FALL FESTIVAL

Our 20th Annual Fall Festival dinner and silent auction, held on Saturday, October 20, 2012 at Camp Cheerful raised over \$54,000 to benefit camp programming. A special thanks to 20-year Fall Festival committee members Lori Betz, Tim Konczal and Mary Lou Walsh!



## Sparkle, Shimmer & Shine 2012

There was magic in the air once again at our annual Sparkle, Shimmer and Shine gala honoring Robert J. King, Jr., President and CEO of Park View Federal Savings Bank on November 10, 2012. It was a night to remember with over 400 guests attending, and raising over \$490,000 for the benefit of the children with disabilities and the families we serve. We are so very grateful to all our generous sponsors, supporters and distinguished guests.

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## Volunteer Group Efforts Grow

This past August, employees of **Brickman Landscaping** chose our Highland Hills location for their annual community project in recognition of their Founder's Day. A crew of hard-working volunteers spruced up the landscaping around our building, and around our playgrounds. Their projects included erosion control solutions, soil and seed on small hills, new mulch and the addition of colorful perennials. Our beautiful landscaping and flowers welcome children and families as they come to school or for appointments.



## GROUP HUGS FOR ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS

Here are some ideas to bring your work team together to show your community support for children with disabilities and their families. We'd love to talk to you to find the ideal opportunities for you and your company! **Your business can . . .**

**Sponsor a specific program, service or event:** • "Camperships" for children to attend camp • "Adopt a Horse Stall" in our Therapeutic Riding program • Donate new books for our Literacy Program • Purchase equipment for our therapy, education or adapted aquatics programs

**Hold your own special event or fundraising activity:** Be creative and have some fun! Last year, we received donations from bake sales, jeans day, a Chili Cook Off, a 50/50 raffle, and even a BLT sandwich sale! Any amount donated is greatly appreciated.

**Offer a Matching Gift:** Does your employer offer a matching gift program? If so, your donation can make an even greater impact for children with disabilities. Just visit [www.achievementcenters.org](http://www.achievementcenters.org) and follow the link on the home page to find out if your employer offers matching gifts.

Please call Deborah Osgood (216-292-9700 ext 224), Vice President of Development and Marketing, with your ideas to involve your company in our Achievement Centers' mission.

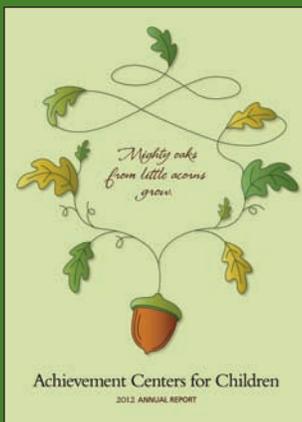
Many thanks to our  
**ADAPTED SPORTS PARTNERS**



## 2011–2012 Annual Report

- We provided more than 7,924 programs and services to 4,370 individuals and their families.
- We provided approximately \$1.2 million in subsidized services.
- Out of every dollar donated, \$.83 goes directly for the benefit of our clients and to further our mission.

Read more about the ways we make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities and their families by downloading a copy of our Annual Report, or by calling the Development Office at 216-292-9700 ext 224 for a copy to be mailed to you.



## INTENSIVE THERAPY CLINIC

Our Intensive Therapy Clinic is attracting families from both Ohio and outside the state due to the high level of expertise of our therapists, and uniqueness of the program that is achieving remarkable results in functional abilities for children and young adults with neuro-muscular conditions.

Visit our website, [www.achievementcenters.org/intensive](http://www.achievementcenters.org/intensive), to see our new Intensive Therapy Clinic video, and see how Layla is now walking independently, Paul has learned to walk, and Sam's mother has new hope for her progress.

## ACHIEVE CONSULTING

### *New! Online Training Programs for Education Professionals*

Our new online professional training courses for both special education and regular education classroom teachers are designed to offer the convenience of online training, with a personalized approach by our experienced team of teaching specialists. Participants will come away from our classes with concrete strategies for their classrooms and schools. Graduate credit is available through Ashland University.

For a complete list of all professional trainings offered through Achieve Consulting, visit [www.achievementcenters.org/training](http://www.achievementcenters.org/training) or call Kristin Vigar at 216-292-9700 ext 306.

## Achievement Centers for Children

*Providing Services to Children with Disabilities and their Families*

HIGHLAND HILLS  
4255 Northfield Road  
Highland Hills, OH 44128  
216-292-9700

WESTLAKE  
24211 Center Ridge Road  
Westlake, OH 44145  
440-250-2520

CAMP CHEERFUL  
15000 Cheerful Lane  
Strongsville, OH 44136  
440-238-6200



# the Achiever

Achievement Centers for Children  
4255 Northfield Road  
Highland Hills, OH 44128



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OUR MISSION is to enable and empower children with disabilities and their families to grow, learn, play and prepare for lifelong achievement in society.

## HELPING CHILDREN BE "ALL THEY CAN BE"

*Founded in 1940 as Society  
for Crippled Children*

A non-profit organization providing support, services and programs for children with disabilities and special needs and their families.

Programs include education and autism services; physical, occupational and speech therapy; Intensive Therapy Clinic; family support services; recreation, camp and sports programs.

## LOCATIONS

Highland Hills  
Westlake  
Camp Cheerful in Strongsville  
Child cares, schools, homes  
216-292-9700



## SPECIAL EVENTS

Help support our mission . . . join us! For more details, visit [www.achievementcenters.org](http://www.achievementcenters.org)



## SAVE THE DATE • • • • FUN ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

### FAMILY FUN DAY

**Saturday, April 27, 2013**

Achievement Centers for Children  
Westlake, Ohio

### CAMP CHEERFUL OPEN HOUSE

**Saturday, June 1, 2013**

15000 Cheerful Lane  
Strongsville, Ohio

### A MOST EXCELLENT RACE 2013

*Presented by Majestic Steel USA*

**SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2013**

[www.achievementcenters.org/race](http://www.achievementcenters.org/race)

Join us on Twitter #ACCRAACE for tips and info on the race

