



# the Achiever

## SIDNEY'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Sidney was born prematurely at 32 weeks and only weighed 3 lb. 2 oz. She had some breathing issues, but otherwise appeared perfect. Sidney's mother, Ebony, was relieved to bring little Sidney home after a one month stay in the hospital.

After Sidney was born, Ebony and her good friend, Carmella, started a child care center, which allowed Ebony to continue to care for her daughter and start a new career path. Just before Sidney's second birthday, Carmella suggested that Ebony do some research about autism because as an educator, she had some questions about Sidney's behavior. As Ebony did her research, she realized her daughter displayed many of the characteristics described for children with autism. Thinking back, she remembered her friends commenting that Sidney appeared "spoiled" or "snobbish" as a baby because she didn't like to be touched by anyone other than her mother and father. She had never known a child with autism, and Sidney was her first child, so she didn't think much about it until she gained the new information through her research.

When Sidney was tested and her family received the diagnosis of autism, they felt overwhelmed. What did her diagnosis mean, how could she best help her daughter, and what would their future be like? Ebony contacted their local Euclid school system for support and early intervention services. The school district found Sidney's

needs surpassed their resources, so they referred the family to the Achievement Centers for Children.

Sidney started coming to the Achievement Centers for Children Autism School in Highland Hills when she was three years old. She had feeding issues, and since she was non-verbal, she could not express her needs and wants, or tell her mother why she was unable to eat many foods. Now nine years old, Sidney has been in our autism school for six years, and Ebony has seen dramatic progress in her daughter, especially with her interactions with her classmates and her improved focus on her daily activities.

"She's very happy here and she loves her teachers. She likes the structure, knowing what she's going to do, and she has friends in her class. Since she has so much one-on-one teaching here, they are able to focus on and help develop her strengths in ways she best responds. Sidney is keyboarding now, and her teachers are amazed at her advanced level of reading and comprehension. She loves to sing as she reads and follows the words with her fingers. Her teachers are so gifted, trained, and compassionate in caring for my daughter. Their care and compassion extends to our entire family. They seem to know my daughter so well, and they understand what I'm going through, and are there to support us," said Ebony.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) identified the prevalence of autism in the United States as 1 in 68 children having autism spectrum disorder (ASD), making it the fastest growing disability. The importance of early intervention for children like Sidney, and the need for help for families has never been greater. According to the CDC, research shows that early intervention treatment services can greatly improve a child's development. Early intervention services help children from birth to 3 years old (36 months) learn important skills. Services include therapy to help the child talk, walk, and interact with others. Therefore, it is important to talk to your child's doctor as soon as possible if you think your child has an ASD or other developmental problem. For more information and resources, visit [www.achievementcenters.org/family-resources/links](http://www.achievementcenters.org/family-resources/links).

*"She was the perfect little angel."*

—Ebony Storrs,  
Sidney's mother



---

## Dear Friends,

Sally Farwell  
President & CEO



The first five years of life are crucial for all children, but are especially so for children at risk of falling behind, including children with disabilities and children living in poverty. Approximately 60% of the children we serve fall into both categories. At the Achievement Centers for Children, we have a proud history of providing pivotal services to very young children with disabilities. Research shows that brain plasticity is greatest before the age of five. Thus, the early years represent a critical window in which the environments we create and the services

we provide can have the greatest impact on a child's ability to succeed. The critical development that occurs during the early years not only includes physical, language, and cognitive development, but also social-emotional development. In fact, recent research indicates that social-emotional development, including self-regulation and the ability to maintain nurturing human relationships, has a significant impact on a child's learning and future successes.

We will continue to focus on developing programs to serve very young children with disabilities and their families. We applaud the many organizations in Northeast Ohio and across the nation advocating for and working to institute universal pre-kindergarten and other early intervention services. In addition, we thank *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* for drawing attention to these very important issues in their special series, the "First 2,000 Days."

We hope you will join the movement to give all children their best chance for success.

Sally Farwell  
President & CEO



## Beverly Stadler Harris Bequest

A generous gift was recently received from the estate of Beverly Stadler Harris. Mrs. Harris grew up in the Cleveland area and later moved to Wheaton, Illinois, but always considered Cleveland her home. We are very grateful for Beverly's legacy gift that will benefit so many children with disabilities and their families!

---

### ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015–2016

Cipriano Beredo  
Mary Betsill  
Julie Boland  
Amy Brady  
William Brancovsky  
Frank W. Buck

Mike Bunker  
Rita Carroll  
Debbie Connelly  
David Dannemiller  
Ben Davies  
David Dunstan  
Mary Kim Elkins

Rhonda Ferguson  
Richard Grossberg, MD  
Charles W. Hardin, Jr.  
Nicole T. Hilbert  
Lawrence M. Hirsh  
Gary Hsich, MD  
Mozelle Jackson

James Kacic  
Jeannette Knudsen  
Stephen B. Perry  
Boyd Pethel  
Brian E. Powers  
Michael Reese  
Neal Restivo

Edmund (Ned) Searby  
Peter J. Shipley  
Michael Silvestro  
Karen Sorace-Thomas  
Marvin (Bud) A. Thomas, Jr.  
Tiffani Tucker  
Sally Turner

Jennifer L. Vergilii  
Paul Voinovich  
DIRECTORS EMERITI  
John G. Breen  
Bruce G. Higley  
Thomas McKee

# NATURE AND NURTURING AT CAMP CHEERFUL



**W**hat would you look for in a day camp for your child? You might consider an outdoor environment where your child could run and play, swim, create arts and crafts, make new friends, try new activities with enthusiastic counselors, and return home at the end of the day with smiles and stories. If you have a child with special needs, you look for these same experiences with an added dimension of care and attention that is unique for your child.

Adam, now nine years old, has been coming to the Achievement Centers for Children Camp Cheerful each summer for the past four years, and still flaps his arms in excited anticipation as they drive

across the bridge leading into camp. Adam loves to swim and canoe, and just be outside in the fresh air at camp. Here Adam has counselors that understand his special needs, build upon his unique abilities, and

*“I have complete trust in the staff, they are amazing”*

—Kim Hawkins, Adams’s mother

guide him through a structured day of fun activities while allowing for the quiet afternoon rest time that he needs. This year, his mother is looking forward to sending Adam to camp with his new iPad and a speech program that will allow Adam to more easily communicate his wants and needs.

“I have complete trust in the staff; they are amazing. We’ve become personal friends with several of his past counselors. I know he’s in good hands when we drop him off in the morning, and there is always someone looking out for my little guy,” said Adam’s mother, Kim Hawkins.

Camp Cheerful has meant so much more to Adam and his family than just his summer day camp experiences. He has also been in therapeutic horseback riding lessons for the past four years, and last year played adapted football. His mother has seen Adam’s balance, strength, posture, and speech improve as a result of his weekly horseback riding lessons. Each week, his volunteers encourage him to try to say the command “walk on” to his horse. To Adam’s delight, his horse understands and responds obediently. This immediate response is very important for reinforcement as he works on developing his speech. In our Cleveland Browns Adapted Football program, Adam experienced the thrill of running down the field with his volunteer at the Cleveland Browns Training Facility in Berea with his family and friends cheering him on.

If you have a child with special needs, you want the same experiences and opportunities for your child as their peers. This is what we offer—and more—for children, teens, and adults with disabilities at the Achievement Centers for Children.



Photo: John H. Reid III

*Adam enjoys all that Camp Cheerful has to offer—from Therapeutic Horseback Riding to Adapted Football and Summer Day Camp.*





(l to r) Pat Nobili, Achievement Centers' Past President and CEO; Bruce Higley; Sally Farwell, Achievement Centers' President and CEO

“One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.”

—CHINESE PROVERB

A new pin oak tree was planted in our new outdoor “Quiet Space” designed for use by our staff when working one-on-one with a child who might benefit from some down time or quiet time. There is a wooden swing, a decorative box holding books, puppets and other quiet activities.

The tree was planted at our Highland Hills site in honor of our 2014 Sparkle, Shimmer and Shine honoree, Bruce Higley. Bruce was Board President in 2005–2007, was instrumental in the construction of our Highland Hills facility and has been a longstanding, passionate supporter of the agency, and the children and families we serve. Thank you to the Patti Group who donated our new tree and planted it.

We will all enjoy watching the small tree grow into a giant oak offering shade and nature’s calming effects. Thank you Bruce!

## Big News! IRA Giving Provision Now Permanent!

Did you know that Congress passed a law that allows you to make direct gifts to charity from your IRA with no tax consequences? And the provision is now permanent for qualifying donors year after year. This is a great way to support the Achievement Centers for Children! Contact your IRA plan administrator about taking advantage of this giving option for a tax-free gift from your IRA.

If you are age 70½ or older, you can gift up to \$100,000 from your IRA with no taxable income. If you haven’t taken your IRA required minimum distribution (RMD), these transfers count toward your RMD. Contact your IRA plan administrator to find out how to take advantage of this law and support children with disabilities and their families!

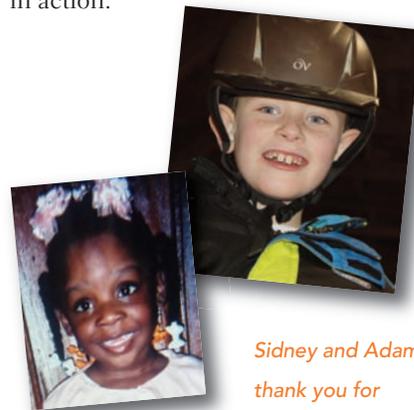
## If you are touched by the stories you read in our newsletter . . .

. . . you may want to support the mission of the Achievement Centers for Children! Gifts of cash are much appreciated and essential to our work. Making a gift of cash is as simple as writing a check, or going on our website (achievementcenters.org) and authorizing a charge. And there are other ways to make a difference: stock gifts, life insurance and IRA designations are just a few other options.

Gifts of stock that have increased in value can help us provide our high quality services. If you have a life insurance policy that you no longer need, it may be a perfect way to donate. Designating the Achievement Centers for Children as the beneficiary of your IRA is also a simple but meaningful way to impact the lives of the families we serve.

Over 95% of clients with disabilities receiving services at the Achievement Centers achieved or partially achieved

their individualized goals last year. Charitable support from individuals like you helps make these successes possible. Call Deborah Osgood, Vice President of Development and Marketing at 216-292-9700 x224 to learn more about making a financial donation to the Achievement Centers or to schedule a time for a tour to see our programs in action.



Sidney and Adam thank you for making their futures brighter!

## Thank you to our generous sponsors for the ADAPTED SPORTS PROGRAM

PARTNERS:



GOLD SPONSORS:

Vana Family Foundation

KOHL'S Cares





*"They Have Oranges"  
by Chloe in our  
Autism School.*

## ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS IN THE COMMUNITY

### "I Made it Myself" Student Art Show

**A**rtwork created by children in our Autism School and adults in our River Rock Adult Day program is being showcased around town. Students learned about different art techniques from famous artists such as Monet, Matisse, and Warhol, and experimented with different mediums. Many thanks to our corporate and community supporters such as Ernst & Young, Warrensville Library, Westlake Porter Library, Strongsville Recreation Center, Omnova Solutions, and the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County who proudly displayed the unique art show. The exhibit will continue to travel around town, so watch for it! Our "I Made it Myself" art display is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.



**T**hanks to the entire team from Inspection Tech for including the Achievement Centers for Children in their "Giving Back" program! Inspection Tech generously donates a portion of their home inspection fees

to several non-profits on behalf of their customers. The financial donations from Inspection Tech help to support our many programs and services and directly impact those we serve. They even took time to come for a tour of our Westlake facility . . . Inspection Tech, we appreciate you!



*(l to r) Sally Farwell, President and CEO; Wendy Lazor; and Michelle Burnett, Exec. VP and CPO*

### Wendy Lazor Congratulated as "Staff Member of the Year" Award Winner!

**W**endy started working for the Achievement Centers as a resource teacher in our Technical Assistance (TAP) program in 2002. She holds a Master's Degree in Special Education, and is now a Parent Educator for the Achievement Centers for Children Autism School helping families as their liaison between school and home. She says the best part of her job is "visiting families in their home and personally helping them with effective strategies and resources to help their children be successful."

### 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



Editor: Katherine Henry; Contributors: Sally Farwell, Deborah Osgood, Katherine Henry

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

# the Achiever

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



NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CLEVELAND, OH  
PERMIT NO. 1162

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 school; 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 care centers, schools, homes  
216-292-9700



# SPECIAL EVENTS

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



Presented by



**SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2016**  
**Beaumont School**

- Timed 10K and 5K races
    - 5K walk
  - Family activities including Flower Clown, bounce house, art activities, DJ, and refreshments
- [achievementcenters.org/race](http://achievementcenters.org/race)

**BLUE CHIP BLUE TEE GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Monday,  
August 1, 2016  
Kirtland Country Club

**FALL FESTIVAL**  
Saturday,  
October 22, 2016  
Camp Cheerful

**SPARKLE, SHIMMER & SHINE GALA**  
Saturday,  
November 12, 2016  
InterContinental Hotel  
Cleveland