

# the Achiever

A covered bridge will take you across rough terrain and deep waters. The roof will shield you from stormy weather. With each step taken on the wooden planks, progress is made toward the other side.

Here at the Achievement Centers for Children's Child Development Center (CDC), our specially trained, caring teachers guide each child across their own bridge from their home to readiness for school. Each child is taken by the hand, nurtured and guided at their own pace, and provided individualized goals and encouragement. The CDC provides a uniquely outstanding child development program for children ages three to five years, with and without special needs. Our program encourages curiosity, creativity, and potential for growth. Research has shown that the first five years of a child's development, especially in children with special needs or disabilities, can be critical in achieving their full potential and independence as adults. Children with physical disabilities, developmental delays and autism, as well as speech issues and social/emotional issues are welcomed into our classrooms.

## Macario Builds His Success

When Macario's parents received the diagnosis that their son had autism, they were devastated. They worried whether he would ever be independent; they worried how much he could learn.



Achievement Centers for Children

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER: A COVERED BRIDGE

Mrs. Perkins says, "Achievement Centers' CDC was the answer to my prayers. My son now talks, eats his lunch, draws pictures and tells me about his day . . . these are things he never was able to do before." Macario is four years old and started coming to our CDC last October. At that time, he couldn't draw a line on a paper, but now he can write his name and draw pictures. His psychologist told Mrs. Perkins recently that Macario has improved magnificently, crediting his teachers and his program at the CDC. His Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals have been met . . . and exceeded. His family also received services through our Technical Assistance Program (TAP), and are looking forward to Macario



Macario

receiving speech therapy and occupational therapy as well. He will be able to have these services provided while he attends the CDC during the day.

We have found that by integrating children with special needs together with their typical peers, all of the children benefit. Children with special needs and disabilities learn very quickly by imitating their typical peers, and typical children develop a compassion and understanding of differences very early on. These are qualities that when developed early in a child's life, carry over into their adult life, and are lessons not usually found in a preschool setting.

## Guiding Gavi

Gavi's parents felt that their son needed a preschool program that offered more in the way of individualized care and expertise to help develop Gavi's social and behavioral skills, in addition to readiness skills for school. After researching preschools, touring the Child Development Center and meeting the teachers, Mrs. Govitch said, "the

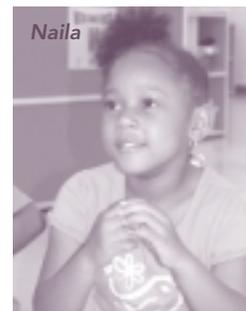


Gavi

teachers and set-up of the classrooms . . . matched everything in my mind when I think of good classrooms and teachers." The classrooms have a low teacher to child ratio (1:4 - 1:6) compared to the state standards of 1:12. Being of the Orthodox Jewish faith, Mrs. Covitch was pleased to find the teachers very culturally sensitive, encouraging Gavi to share his holiday traditions with his classmates. There are monthly written progress reports, and team meetings, but Mrs. Covitch also appreciates the daily, informal interactions and accessibility of Gavi's teachers.

## Naila's Second Home

Naila started attending the CDC when she was two and a half years old and will soon celebrate her fifth birthday. Naila is a typically developing child,



Naila

whose progress with reading readiness and socialization is impressive. Because Naila showed a special interest in reading, her teachers encouraged her

and today she enjoys reading books to the other children in her class. When Mrs. Ali leaves Naila in the morning to go to work, she knows that "her baby" is safe, happy and will have a good day.

We are proud to be an important part of each child's journey crossing their own personal bridge to becoming "all they can be."

## Message from the Executive Director

*Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA*



### ACCREDITATION and LICENSURE

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

American Camp Association  
Certified Medicaid Provider  
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities  
Cuyahoga County Early Intervention Collaborative member  
North American Riding for the Handicapped Association  
Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Human Services  
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities  
Ohio Department of Mental Health  
United Way Agency  
Numerous agreements with area universities and colleges

*For information and referrals*  
216-292-9700

*To receive the Achiever electronically, visit our website*  
[www.achievementcenters.org](http://www.achievementcenters.org)

*If you would like to be removed from the Achiever mailing list please notify us in writing at: Achievement Centers for Children, 4255 Northfield Road, Highland Hills, OH 44128.*

### DEAR FRIENDS,

The Achievement Centers for Children is celebrating 70 years of service to children and young adults with disabilities and their families. At a time when our community/state/country have experienced so many challenges, we sometimes overlook the many good deeds and good people that surround us. I am fortunate that I am reminded on an almost daily basis, how many people and companies in our community are caring and giving. This continued support, from so many, during these very challenging times, has helped the Achievement Centers for Children provide exemplary and critically needed services into our 70th year for thousands and thousands of children with disabilities and their families.

The word courage comes immediately to my mind when thinking of the children and families we serve, and now also, when I think of our many supporters, especially during such financially difficult times. I believe that courage comes in many forms and sizes. Courage can be a moment of bravery—the kind we see in the news. Or courage can be seen in one's strength of resolutions and steadiness over time. This kind of courage might be in one's willingness to take some risks, to function well under prolonged stress or pressure, to survive defeat and keep going on, or to continue to have hope even when life presents huge and painful challenges.

I am often in awe of the human spirit and the quiet courage that surrounds us in our every day lives. I see phenomenal courage, though quiet, in children with disabilities and their families. We see children who have been given so many barriers to overcome and so very early in their lives. The children's courage can be seen in their pushing their bodies and minds (with help) to do all that they can, and through also focusing on the good things life offers, instead of being consumed by all the potential barriers which may be before them. Families and the Achievement Centers see the abilities and promise in their child, rather than only seeing the disability. Courage enables us to act against great odds and helps us continue to see the positives in our lives even when faced with great difficulties.

At the Achievement Centers for Children, we see courage on a daily basis—through a child's persistence to achieve new skills, through a family working tirelessly to unfold the promise that exists in their child, and through the giving of so many who care about the pain and difficulties children with disabilities experience, even though the giver may be experiencing many challenges of their own. The Achievement Centers for Children applauds all those we serve and all those who support the "courage of life."

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Patricia W. Nobili".

Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA  
*Executive Director*

**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



Jennifer and Todd

## Bells and Whistles Added to the Therapeutic Riding Program

Thanks to the vision of Jennifer Stankiewicz, the Manager of Equine Programs at Camp Cheerful, the industrious Eagle Scout, Todd Gaydosh, and the generosity of Momentive Performance Materials, our therapeutic horseback riders have a new sensory trail to experience with their specially trained horses.

Completed last August, the new sensory trail provides riders with activities that will trigger all of their senses in a fun, learning environment. There are different types of footing materials on the trail such as rocks, sand, and a wooden bridge to listen to the horse's steps. Riders can feel how the horse moves differently over the various surfaces. There are also bells and wind chimes located in three areas that riders can touch and hear. Colorful foam "noodles" hanging for the horses to walk through and a "bucket station" for riders to drop balls into add bright colors to the course and allow the riders to practice maneuverability and eye-hand coordination in a fun way.

Jennifer worked with Todd, who chose to work on the trail for his Eagle Scout project. Todd's mother, Debbie and sister, Kelly, are dedicated Therapeutic Riding volunteers, so Todd had a special interest in the program. As part of his project, he raised over \$700 and recruited 25 scouts, who together cleared the trail and laid out the gravel. Congratulations on earning your Eagle Award, Todd, and thank you for your hard work on the Sensory Trail.

Momentive Performance Materials Inc. donated supplies and other items while teams of employees donated their time and hard work to incorporate the sensory trail elements and complete the trail. The dedication, caring and hard work of all the supporters and teams of volunteers will be appreciated by many, many children with special needs for years to come.



Feel the foam "noodles"



Momentive Performance Materials volunteers



Hear the wind in the chimes

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### "GET ACQUAINTED" BREAKFAST

June 29, 2010, 8:30 AM

Achievement Centers for Children's Breen Family Center  
4255 Northfield Road, Highland Hills, Ohio 44128

Learn more about the work and mission of the Achievement Centers, view a video, tour our state-of-the-art facility, and enjoy breakfast! Please call Helen Mack at 216-292-9700 ext 248 by June 24 to make reservations.



Did you know that you can make a significant gift to the Achievement Centers for Children with little or no initial outlay? If you have a life insurance policy, retirement plan or savings account that you no longer need you can assign charity as the beneficiary. This practice is becoming an increasingly popular gifting option for individuals from all walks of life.

Why? Because making a no cost charitable gift is simple while having a potentially great impact on the Achievement Centers' mission. This type of gift is especially ideal for the individual who wishes to remember a favorite charity but does not have the cash assets available to make a meaningful gift during his or her lifetime. Furthermore, naming the Achievement Centers as the beneficiary of this type of asset can also reduce income taxes by ultimately decreasing the size of the taxable estate.

Pensions, profit sharing plans and other qualified plans such as IRA and 401(k) plans can also be directed to pass to charity after you are gone. These plans are the best way to accumulate wealth, but often are among the worst ways to pass it to heirs because of the heavy tax burden that is placed upon their transfer. The balance remaining in a qualified plan at death can be subject to taxes that can easily claim up to 75% or more of its value. Therefore, if you have accumulated more money in your qualified plan than you will spend during your lifetime, it is a good idea to consider the Achievement Centers as the residual beneficiary.

Life insurance is an asset that is frequently overlooked as a gift possibility. Gifting a life insurance policy allows you to easily convert a modest lifetime contribution into a much larger gift of insurance proceeds at death as well as an immediate charitable deduction. If the policy is not paid up you can make additional annual deductible cash gifts to enable the charity to pay each year's premium. Many people receive life insurance from their

employers as a fringe benefit. But, for insurance in excess of \$50,000, tax law requires the employee to pay income tax and FICA on the cost of that coverage. Assigning the Achievement Centers as the beneficiary of one of these policies simultaneously lowers both the employee's and the employer's income tax with no out-of-pocket expense to you.

While each of these gifts can be made by completing a simple change of beneficiary or POD form, donors are advised to consult their legal and financial advisors before making any planned gift or before claiming an income tax deduction.

If you are interested in receiving additional information about gifting options that will qualify you for membership in our Oak Tree Society, please call Deborah Osgood in the Development Office at 216-292-9700 or send her an e-mail at [deborah.osgood@achievementctrs.org](mailto:deborah.osgood@achievementctrs.org). She will be happy to assist you!

## ACLARA RF SYSTEMS AND ESCO TECHNOLOGIES FOUNDATION *A Corporate Philosophy of Philanthropy*

**J**im Wojtila, CFO of Aclara RF Systems (an ESCO Technologies Inc. company) and Board member of ESCO Technologies Foundation and Katie Evaristo of Aclara RF Systems, proudly presented a check to Pat Nobili for \$7,500 which represents 15 camperships at Camp Cheerful this summer. Employees play a key role in the Foundation's philanthropy through personal donations and by helping to select charities to support. Aclara RF Systems, located in Solon, is proud to have seen an increase in charitable giving by their employees. Mr. Wojtila says, "this says a lot about

Cleveland and their capacity to give and care for others in their community." In June, Aclara RF Systems' employee volunteers will hold their third annual "day of caring" at Camp Cheerful to help spruce up cabins in time for this year's camp season. In addition, Aclara RF Systems have donated much needed printers for our administrative offices.

We believe their involvement says a lot about Aclara RF Systems' employees and the encouragement they receive through their company's community-minded philosophy of philanthropy.

We are so very appreciative for their generous "helping hands!" Thank You!



*Jim Wojtila, Pat Nobili, Katie Evaristo*

# ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN SPECIAL EVENTS



*Michael Petras, Jr. and family*

## *Sparkle, Shimmer & Shine 2009*

Magic was felt by over 400 attendees as they entered the Intercontinental Hotel for the Sparkle, Shimmer and Shine gala November 14, 2009. The magic was created by attendees expressing their passion and support for the mission of the Achievement Centers. Most notably was this year's honoree, Michael B. Petras, Jr., CEO of GE Lighting and Industrial. Michael, a former Board member, has been a devoted advocate for the Achievement Centers for many years. Michael's family, friends and many General Electric colleagues proudly attended to show their support.

Michael spoke from his heart as only a father of a precious daughter with Down syndrome could. Christina was there to steal the show as she enthusiastically announced her love and success in school as well as her experience as a participant in the Therapeutic Horseback Riding at Camp Cheerful.

There was magic in the overwhelming support for Achievement Centers for Children during the "Let's Go To Camp" live auction which brought the total evenings' contributions to over \$440,000 for our programs for children with disabilities and their families. A heartfelt thanks is extended to our community, both individuals and corporations, that allowed us to exceed our goal for providing services to the children and families we serve.

### **PRESENTING SPONSORS**

Jack and Mary Jane Breen  
Jones Day

### **PLATINUM SIGNATURE SPONSORS**

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## *A Most Excellent Race Turns 20!*

Benefiting the Achievement Centers  
for Children's Camp Cheerful.  
Scenic, flat and shaded course  
through Cleveland Heights  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2010**  
10K Run, 5K Run, 5K Family Fun Walk  
Competitive runs are chip-timed  
Visit [www.achievementcenters.org/race](http://www.achievementcenters.org/race)  
to register online  
or call 216-292-9700 ext 226  
for more information.

## *Fall Festival at Camp Cheerful*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2010**  
6:30-11:30 p.m.

Come out for a fun  
and casual evening including:  
Live music  
Great dinner buffet and refreshments  
(beer, wine & soda)  
Great silent auction and raffles  
Advance tickets are \$40 each  
For information or to purchase tickets,  
please call 440-238-6200.  
Proceeds benefit the children  
with disabilities who attend  
Camp Cheerful.

## *Sparkle, Shimmer and Shine 2010*

The magic continues.  
Join us in honoring  
Allyn and John Davies.  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2010**  
Intercontinental Hotel  
For more information,  
for sponsorship opportunities and  
to purchase tickets,  
please call Maggie Musnuff  
at 216-292-9700 ext 226.



## ANGEL'S COINS

According to Ronnie's mother, Jean, "Angels love coins and their favorite coin is a dime."

We are grateful for all the community support we receive so that we may provide much needed services for children with disabilities and their families. But when this generosity comes from the very clients we serve, we are especially touched. Ronnie Weinmann is one such very special young man who enjoys the Therapeutic Riding program at Camp Cheerful, and gets a special joy from riding his favorite horse, Nick.

At age 19, Ronnie found himself needing to use a wheelchair and unable to speak due to the traumatic brain injury he suffered after his car was struck by a drunk driver. Ronnie, along with friends and family, have been saving dimes throughout the year. We recently received a check from Ronnie to use to adopt Nick's stall for one month. "He does so much for me every week, that this is how I would like to thank him," Ronnie wrote in his note. We just know that Nick holds a special affection for Ronnie as well. Our heartfelt thanks to you, Ronnie, for your thoughtful gift for Nick!

## TURNER CONSTRUCTION GIVES TLC TO CAMP CHEERFUL

The employees of Turner Construction are giving much needed Tender Loving Care to facilities at Camp Cheerful. After identifying a lengthy list of potential repair and improvement projects at Camp Cheerful, Turner Construction employees reached out to vendor colleagues and raised over \$3,000 from 19 companies. The funds raised helped provide the materials for the projects the Turner Construction employees worked on. Many of the cabins and other buildings received repairs such as new doors, installation of new windows, rebuilding a deck, re-siding walls, repairing trim and painting floors, all to make the facilities safer, more accessible and more attractive for the campers.

The commitment of the employees of Turner Construction reflects on Turner's core values of teamwork, integrity and commitment of giving back to the communities in which they live, work and build. These important repairs and improvement projects will help us meet the needs of the over 1,700 campers with disabilities that participate in camp each year. Thank you Turner Construction!



Pat Nobili, Vern Hartenburg, Dave Dunstan, Board President

### *Vern Hartenburg Honored at Recent Achievement Centers' Board Meeting*

Retiring Metroparks Director, Vern Hartenburg, was recognized at our March Board meeting for his exceptional support of the Achievement Centers' Camp Cheerful. At the meeting, a camper and his family spoke passionately about the difference Camp Cheerful made in their lives, thanking Mr. Hartenburg for his support. Mr. Hartenburg, the Cleveland Metroparks Commissioners, and the Metroparks staff have supported Camp Cheerful in numerous ways over the past 15 years by providing financial support, extensive in-kind support for both small and large projects, as well as their expertise.

The Achievement Centers for Children applauds and honors Vern Hartenburg for his depth of caring, which has made such a difference in the lives of thousands of children and adults.

## THOUGHTFUL TRIBUTES

Do you have a special celebration or event coming up? Are you looking for a special way to honor a loved one's memory? Tribute gifts to the Achievement Centers are a thoughtful way to honor or remember a special person in your life, while also helping provide programs and services to children with disabilities. Any amount is appreciated, and personalized cards will be sent to the person(s) you name to notify them of your gift. "A generous gift has been made to Achievement Centers for Children in honor of . . ." We will not mention specific dollar amounts.

Gifts of flowers may wilt and wither, but a tribute gift to Achievement Centers for Children will allow a child with disabilities to bloom.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- According to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), approximately 13% of children have a developmental disability, ranging from mild disabilities such as speech and language impairments to serious developmental disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and autism.
- It is estimated that an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD's are reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, yet on average four to five times more likely to occur in boys than in girls.
- The Achievement Centers' nationally-recognized child and family-centered autism program model uses a blended methodology of six researched intervention methods to create an individualized educational plan for each child. This intensive program is designed to maximize each child's potential and provides both individual and small group instruction within a classroom setting. Summer camp, therapy programs, therapeutic horseback riding and adapted aquatics are all available for children with autism. These programs allow children with autism to enjoy fun activities while learning and developing skills and friendships.

## BORDERS BRINGS ON THE BOOKS

### **Books, Books and More Books.**

That's what Camp Cheerful and the Achievement Centers received from the Borders store in Strongsville as a result of their recent book drive. Our teachers, families and children are very appreciative of the books!



Noreen Flannery and her pottery wheel

## 2ND ANNUAL FANTASTIC FAMILY FUN DAY

Saturday, April 24, 2010

The sun shone warmly on the Achievement Centers for Children's Second Annual Fantastic Family Fun Day providing a perfect day of activities and fun for approximately 70 families. This special event was conceived as a way to provide families of children with autism and other special needs opportunities to participate in safe, appropriate and fun activities together.

One of the parents commented that they "felt so good about coming here because nobody looked at them and their child strangely and everyone knew what to do when a child had a rough time." The volunteers appreciated seeing the warm smiles of the children and families as they left the event knowing they were able to provide a day of enjoyment for them. We are looking forward to planning our third Annual Family Fun Day in 2011!

**Special thanks to:** University Hospitals & Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, Nature's Bin Organic Market—Lakewood, Ohio, Music Therapy Enrichment Center, Rock Point Church, Prudential Financial Services, staff and volunteers of the Achievement Centers for Children.

See more photos at [www.flickr.com/photos/achievementcenters](http://www.flickr.com/photos/achievementcenters).



↑ Miniature horse and carriage ride

↓ Rocket ride



← Sand sensory table

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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 therapy, recreation, education and family support services for children with disabilities and their families. We serve over 3,900 children with disabilities and their families each year.

Our mission is to work with children with disabilities and their families to strengthen abilities and create opportunities for lifelong achievement in society.

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

Editor: Katherine Henry; Contributors: Patricia W. Nobili, Deborah Osgood, Rebecca Bendlak, Katherine Henry

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### ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN Services by Location

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

#### Home and Community Services (offices at the Highland Hills and Westlake locations)

ACCENT, Early childhood mental health counseling, early intervention program for children ages birth to three with special needs; Help Me Grow Service coordination for children with special needs and at-risk, ages birth to three; child care Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

#### East/Highland Hills

Child Development Center preschool for children with and without special needs; preschool for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; kindergarten through fourth grade classroom for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; social work and counseling; physical, speech and occupational therapy; Champ Camp and Sensational Day Program (summers only); parent support groups

#### West/Westlake

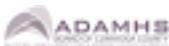
Preschool for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; kindergarten through fourth grade classroom for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder/PDD-NOS; social work and counseling; physical, speech and occupational therapy; Champ Camp and Sensational Day Program (summers only); Adapted Aquatics; parent support groups

#### South/Strongsville/Camp Cheerful

Social work and counseling; recreational activities; residential and day camp programs; Sensational Day Program; therapeutic riding; High Ropes Challenge Course



A United Way Agency



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