Carli is a 10-year old student in our Highland Hills autism classroom who loves movies, singing, dancing and twirling. One of her favorite movies is *Frosty the Snowman*. Her mother, Kathy, describes Carli as being very much like her favorite movie’s main character.

“When Carli was first diagnosed with autism at 2½ years of age, she was sort of like Frosty without his hat. The magic was within her. She just had no way of letting it out. She lost all her words. You could bang pots and pans behind her and she wouldn’t even flinch or react. She was trapped inside of herself.”

“However, with the help of a bunch of glistening snowflakes (my family, friends, Carli’s therapists, teachers and the entire staff at the Achievement Centers) and a magic hat (help from God above), she began to speak. She began to dance around. She came to life.”

Mothers, like Carli’s mom, along with families and friends of children with autism can tell you what glistening snowflakes of individuality and surprises their children are. Like snowflakes, no two children on the autism spectrum “look” alike—no two children have the same perceptions, anxieties, or learning styles.

With expertise, experience and compassion, teachers in our autism classrooms (preschool–5th grade) provide individualized learning experiences to allow children with autism, like Carli, to develop their abilities, and work through their anxieties to prepare them for success when they are ready to transition to public school. Research has shown that early intervention with specialized services for children with autism is most effective in developing their cognitive and social skills, and prepares them to become capable and productive adults.

Our autism expertise extends throughout all of our programs, including our Therapeutic Riding program’s sensory trail at our Camp Cheerful, adapted aquatics, weekend respite camps, and day camps in the summer. In addition, our Achieve Consulting professionals provide trainings for teachers and paraprofessionals in schools to improve the educational experiences of children with autism in their classrooms.

If Carli’s mom had one wish, it would be to trade places for one day with Carli so she could understand how Carli feels and how she perceives the world around her. Then, maybe she could help her daughter even more. Carli’s mom sees each little developmental step as a gift. “When it takes years for your daughter to be able to say ‘I love you,’ you appreciate it so much more.”

— Kathy, Carli’s mom

The Glistening Snowflakes of Autism

"WHEN THEY PLACED THE MAGIC HAT UPON FROSTY THE SNOWMAN’S HEAD, HE BEGAN TO DANCE AROUND. HE CAME TO LIFE."

— Kathy, Carli’s mom
DEAR FRIENDS,

At a time when we hear so much about the problems in our world, we sometimes overlook the many good deeds and good people that surround us. I am fortunate that I am reminded almost every day, how many people and organizations in our community are extremely caring and giving. Volunteering is an expression of caring and giving. Volunteers come from all walks of life and their “good deeds” may vary tremendously, but they all have one thing in common—a sincere desire to give of themselves for the benefit of others. The Achievement Centers for Children has hundreds of volunteers supporting our efforts.

A few extraordinary examples of our volunteers’ impact are:
1) over 300 volunteers work in our Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program annually, where approximately 80–90 children and young adults ride our gentle horses each week at Camp Cheerful;
2) over 90 volunteers assisted with the implementation of our new Adapted Sports Program, which includes basketball, football, baseball, and aquatics with more sports to come;
3) our Board of Directors and Auction Committee gathered superb community support, raising over $436,000 at our Sparkle, Shimmer & Shine Gala on November 12.

WOW! What a remarkable difference our volunteers continue to make in the lives of children with disabilities and their families.

I believe the following quote from Robert Thorn is applicable to our volunteers:
“When you do what you must, that’s honor,
When you do that, even though it may be difficult or challenging, that’s courage,
And when you do that for the sake of someone else, that’s love
And that’s the best that we can be.”

Perhaps when one is volunteering, it is the best that we can be. We are so grateful to all our volunteers!

Very sincerely,

Tim Fox and Barb Fields

Barb Fields honored as “STAFF OF THE YEAR”

Barb Fields is our Administrative Manager of Recreation and Sports, and has worked at Camp Cheerful for nearly ten years. In that time, she has seen the number of campers triple. "Barb is the contact to many of our families who call with worries on registration or billing, and Barb has the skills and compassion to walk them through the process," commented Tim Fox, vice president of Recreation and Sports. "By the end of the calls, their worries are gone." Barb says the most rewarding aspect of her job is “the children and families that I’ve met, and to see and hear how important Camp Cheerful is to them." Barb has been married to Charlie for 41 years, has three grown children and one grandson. Many thanks to Barb for her love of our mission, and the children and families of the Achievement Centers! Congratulations Barb!

Patricia W. Nobili, MSSA
President & CEO

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Having a son with autism in a very sports-minded family, it is very important for us to find safe and fun ways to expose our Matthew to football as well as other sports. As a full-time football coach at Baldwin-Wallace College, I have a deep appreciation of sports and its life-long, positive effect on young athletes. Naturally, I desire for all of my children to participate in sports and feel very strongly that it will help them as they navigate through life. The Adapted Football League through the Achievement Centers for Children has played a significant role in helping our son gain exposure to football in a safe and fun environment. The coaches and volunteers not only instruct; they support, uplift and encourage each player. They accept each player as an individual and work with him or her at any and every skill level. Our son has received countless acts of kindness, positivity, unconditional love and FUN through his participation in the league. We are so thankful for the Achievement Centers. We look forward to our participation in next year’s flag football league!

— Shelly and John Snell

Many thanks to our ADAPTED SPORTS PARTNERS
Cleveland Browns Foundation
Cleveland Cavaliers
Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Invacare

FOOTBALL GOLD LEVEL SPONSORS
Atfco
N2Y
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Bravo Wellness

ADAPTED SPORTS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW
We are excited to be partnering with the National Basketball Academy (tNBA), Cleveland Cavaliers, and the Michael Carter Group to offer adapted basketball clinics for individuals ages seven and older with special needs through the tNBA’s “Everybody Wins” program.

Our adapted aquatics program is growing, thanks to a new partnership with LifeWorks of Southwest General Hospital. Skilled and caring instructors will teach independent swimming and water safety to children and adults with special needs in LifeWorks’ warm therapy pool and a deeper lap pool.

For more information, visit www.achievementcenters.org/sports
“One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.” —CHINESE PROVERB

When talking to her estate planning attorney about her plans, Kay Baum chose to include the Achievement Centers for Children in her estate plan since her daughter, Jennifer, has been enjoying Camp Cheerful for over 20 years.

At the age of eight months, Jennifer was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Today, Jennifer is 39 years old and looks forward to returning to Camp Cheerful’s residential camp each year. Though she is nonverbal, Jennifer is very expressive and is able to communicate her emotions, needs and wants. Her mother related that Jennifer is very social and likes to be around others, and especially enjoys the dances and being in the pool at camp on a hot summer day.

Many members of our Oak Tree Society relate to us similar personal connections to Achievement Centers for Children, expressing how they have seen family or friends benefit personally, and their desire to be able to help the next generation benefit from all our programs. The process of naming Achievement Centers in your will is simply executed by your attorney, and is appreciated from any size estate.

Donors who support us with a planned gift are part of our Oak Tree Society—to learn more about planned giving and the Achievement Centers, call Deborah Osgood, Vice President of Development and Marketing at 216-292-9700. Or visit www.achievementcenters.org/donate to find out more online.

MOMENTIVE “HIGH FIVES” FOR CAMP CHEERFUL

Employees of Momentive Performance Materials choose Camp Cheerful for the fifth year for their annual “Day of Caring.” Among the seven major projects completed was the reconstruction of a bridge along the therapeutic horseback riding sensory trail.

Strongsville Mayor Thomas Perciak commended the group of 70 volunteers during the bridge dedication ceremony by saying “You have no idea how many hearts you have touched and how many people’s faces you have placed smiles upon.” Many thanks to the outstanding group of volunteers from Momentive!
TURN UP THE HEAT CAMPAIGN

Our therapeutic horseback riding program horses warm the hearts of each and every child they carry. Now it’s our turn to warm the hearts of our riders, volunteers and horses by heating our indoor riding arena.

You can help by:

1) Making an online gift and designating your gift for “Riding Arena Heater.” Visit www.achievementcenters.org

2) Making a gift by phone by calling 440-238-6200 ext. 222

3) Mailing a check in the enclosed envelope, adding “TR-Arena Heaters” in the memo line of your check.

Rambus Foundationadopts Cheyenne

Many thanks to the Rambus Foundation for being an “Adopt-A-Horse Stall” donor. Their generous contribution provides for hay and grain, veterinary and farrier services, bedding, medication, and other related needs.

Did You Know?

- We have openings in our 3-Star Step Up to Quality Child Development Center for preschoolers? And . . .
- Our center is an inclusive preschool and child care, offering speech, occupational and physical therapy sessions (when needed) for children during their school day,
- With low teacher to child ratio (1:4), we are able to provide children individual attention and direction to help them excel in kindergarten and elementary school.
- Please call Peggy at 216-292-9700 ext. 261 for a tour of our facilities and to speak with our educators.
- Through our Family Support programs, over 1,600 children, ages birth to three and their families received home visiting services last year including developmental assessments, parenting education, parent/child counseling and linkage to other programs.
- Our pediatric therapy specialists use many creative tools to motivate children, such as iPads, Wii, games and music. Therapy services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and our Intensive Therapy Clinic.

Achievement Centers for Children
Providing Services to Children with Disabilities and their Families

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<td>Westlake, OH 44145</td>
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Majestic Steel USA in partnership with the Cleveland Indians hosted an “Up to Bat” VIP Workout Day for over 60 Camp Cheerful campers at Progressive Field in July. Campers experienced a variety of baseball-themed activities during the day such as running the bases, hitting and fielding, and returned the following week to watch a real Indians’ game. Many thanks to Majestic Steel USA for putting smiles on children’s faces, and giving them a wonderful day to remember.

Achievement Centers for Children
22nd Annual A Most Excellent Race
Benefiting Camp Cheerful
Presented by Majestic Steel USA
SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2012
10K Run (timed), 5K Run (timed), 5K Family Fun Walk (non-timed)
Family Activities
Visit www.achievementcenters.org/race to register or donate online.

Majestic Steel USA Created a Major League Experience for Camp Cheerful Campers

Majestic Steel USA in partnership with the Cleveland Indians hosted an “Up to Bat” VIP Workout Day for over 60 Camp Cheerful campers at Progressive Field in July. Campers experienced a variety of baseball-themed activities during the day such as running the bases, hitting and fielding, and returned the following week to watch a real Indians’ game. Many thanks to Majestic Steel USA for putting smiles on children’s faces, and giving them a wonderful day to remember.

Editor: Katherine Henry; Contributors: Patricia Nobili, Deborah Osgood, Katherine Henry