

The Chase Academy

“Chase the Dream!”

Volume 1, Issue 1
November 2006

Letter from the Executive Director

On behalf of my team, I welcome you to the first issue of The Chase Academy's newsletter (perhaps we need a catchy name).

As we head into this venture, I continually ask myself “How did I get here?” I am the single mother of two ASD children and a full time middle school teacher, so to say my plate is full is pretty much an understatement. But the other night, I saw a commercial about an elderly woman for whom many people “almost volunteered” and was struck by its stark message, “almost volunteering is like not volunteering at all.”

It's the same with The Chase Academy – *almost* starting a school for my son and the hundreds of

other children just like him would be like doing nothing at all, and as a mother, nothing at all was not an option for me.

I, like you, believe in my son and his potential to learn, though perhaps not in ordinary ways under ordinary means, but that's ok. The opposite of ordinary is **extraordinary**, and that's what kind of kid I have! He has extraordinary potential and an extraordinary outlook on life, and has been such an extraordinary blessing to me. As a mother, an educator and a professional, he's given me new meaning, new purpose and now new drive.

The Chase Academy is no dream, it **IS** coming! It will be built by those who

can imagine its possibilities, and it will be funded by those who believe.



MIRIAM “MIMI” LUNDELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Won't you come too? And bring your child – we always welcome at least one more.

Mimi Lundell

Special points of interest:

- *Make sure your child checks out our “Kids Korner!”*
- *Has your family joined The Chase Academy family? Chase the Dream with us by becoming a member!*
- *Would you like to make a contribution to The Chase Academy? Our “Wish List” will give you some ideas on how you can make the most impact.*

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Hurray for McKay!

Special-Education Idea Raises Legal Issues; Proposal OKs Public Money for Private Schools

By Deborah Yetter for The Courier-Journal
<http://tinyurl.com/h5l6m>

Note: some other states (including Florida) already

provide this critically important “non-public school” option to parents of disabled children. - ed.

Betsy Gibbs said the skills her autistic daughter Elizabeth learned in private school and through therapy began to disappear after only a few weeks in a pub-

lic elementary school.

“It fell apart so fast,” said Gibbs, of Louisville, KY who said she now teaches Elizabeth, 13, at home after battling unsuccessfully with school officials for better services.

So yesterday Gibbs joined

Hurray for McKay! (continued from page 1)

about 12 other parents to endorse proposed legislation that would let them choose another school -- public or private -- if they are unhappy with special education at their public school. The state would pay the tuition with money from the former school.

Potentially the measure could affect about 110,000 children in Kentucky public schools who have a learning disability, which the state Education Department says is up 25,000 from 10 years ago.

Rep. Stan Lee, R-Lexington, said he's hearing from an increasing number of parents frustrated with services in their local schools and unable to find solutions.

"This gives the education choice back to the parents where we believe it belongs," said Lee, who plans to sponsor the measure in the 2007 legislative session with Rep. David Floyd, R-Bardstow.

The proposal drew immediate questions from some lawmakers and the Kentucky Education Association, who criticized the use of public money for private schools.

An organization supporting the bill, Bluegrass Institute, a nonpartisan Kentucky advocacy group, said Florida, Ohio, Utah and, most recently, Arizona have enacted legislation similar to Lee's.

But the amount of support for such a bill in Kentucky was unclear.

"That's probably unconstitutional and bad public policy," said state Rep. Mary Lou Marzian, D-Louisville and a member of the House Education Committee. "Surely the House will see that it's a misuse of public funds."

Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville, said through a spokeswoman only that he is "not familiar with the bill."

Lee said some members of the Senate pledged their support but he declined to identify them.

State Rep. Reggie Meeks, D-Louisville, and on the House Education Committee, said he would oppose taking money out of public schools at the expense of those who remain -- including the many minority, immigrant and poor students also in need of extra services.

"Obviously there's a danger here," he said.

Lee acknowledged the measure will face stiff opposition and that past measures for school vouchers have failed in the legislature. But he said he believes parents dissatisfied with their children's special education won't let the matter die.

Constitutional Question

Mary Ann Blankenship, executive director of the KEA, said the teachers organization has not seen Lee's proposal but would oppose it.

"We think that all of us who care about kids in Kentucky should be spending our energy making sure every public school is a great public school," Blankenship said.

Blankenship defended public schools and teachers. "Schools have an obligation to give students an appropriate education and I think they generally do a good job," she said.

The state Education Department has no position on the bill, said spokeswoman Lisa Gross, but pointed out a potential problem.

"The Constitution of Kentucky effectively prohibits spending public money on private schools," she said. "I don't know how this is going to mesh with that."

But Jim Waters, with the Bluegrass Institute, said he believes a U.S. Supreme Court ruling allowing school vouchers in Cleveland would permit the proposed "scholarship" program in Kentucky.

He said his organization, linked to similar groups in other states through the State Policy Network, will work to get the bill passed in Kentucky.

"I want to call on all parents of children, particularly those with special needs, to support this legislation," he said.

How It Would Work

Calling it a scholarship rather than a voucher program, Lee said the bill he plans to file would allow the state to shift money from the former school to the new school of choice.

Lee's proposal would work by redirecting state funds that pay the cost of each child's education in public school.

Currently the state spends an average of about \$3,500 per student a year -- but payments increase for students with learning disabilities. For those students, the state pays schools from about \$4,000 to \$12,000 per year depending on the severity of the disability.

Students now, in general, must attend their local schools unless they can work out a specific agreement with a principal of another school they wish to attend.

Lee's plan would allow parents dissatisfied with special education services to apply to the Education Department for scholarships of up to \$12,000 a year to use at the school of their choice.

Several parents who attended the announcement yesterday said they need to be allowed to have more choices than public schools can provide.

"This is a very big issue for me," said Theresa Fritz Camoriano, a Louisville lawyer who said she placed her daughter, Andrea, in a private school after she got tired of battling the public school bureaucracy for better services.

Andrea Camoriano, 22, graduated from the high school and said she's now doing well at the University of Louisville.

Frank Albicocco of Louisville said he doesn't mind paying public school taxes even after he moved his son, 13, to a private school for better services. But the \$12,000 a year tuition is a strain for him and his wife, Julia, he said.

"There are many nights when my wife and I are wondering how we're going to pay the bills," he said. "All we want is a chance."

[This article was borrowed from: SAR "Healing Autism: Schafer Autism Report No Finer a Cause on the Planet"; September 15, 2006 Vol. 10 No. 163](#)

For information on Florida's McKay Scholarship, visit:

<http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org>

Don't miss the "Private School Information for Parents" section.

KIDS KORNER

Introducing the “Kids Korner” Editor: Karen Lundell

Hi, my name is Karen Lundell; I'm Chase's sister. I'm twelve years old and have Asperger's Syndrome. Some signs are that I'm a perfectionist, wear only certain types of clothes that feel right on me, listen to the same songs over and over again and never get tired of them, and have the uncanny ability to quote entire lines from movies. In school, I get made fun of a lot, though I don't know why. I was never mean to any of the kids that are mean to me. One reason they make fun of me, though, is that I have an unnatural obsession with *Harry Potter* books. I am actually proud to say I have read each book three times, the second one four times. I have Harry Potter flags, books, posters, a robe, scarf and hat set, magazine articles, stuffed animals in Harry Potter costumes, a broom stick, Harry Potter shirts and a jacket. I used to have a pair of glasses, but they broke. To make myself feel better, I listen to my favorite band all the time, Good Charlotte. The two main guys, Joel and Benji, have really inspired me. They

showed me that it doesn't matter how different you are, just go out there and be yourself. A lot of their songs send messages, like *Lifestyles of the Rich and the Famous*. In the song, it tells how celebrities these days are such cry babies.

My mom says I'm an excellent writer, that I can write better than some of her 8th grade students. I read at a 12th grade level. When I was four, I started writing and illustrating my own book, about how I was a super hero and I saved my brother from a building where he was locked inside with some mean men. I drew a picture at the bottom of each page and wrote the same book over and over again until I was seven. Now I write all different kinds of stories. I hope someday to be published.

I watch a lot of T.V. my parents say. I watch almost every show on Nickelodeon, Disney Channel, and some on Cartoon Network. I can watch movies over and over again and never get tired of them, like *High School Musical*.



Karen Lundell
7th Grade
Southwestern Middle
DeLand

When I was younger, I got upset over little things and cried a lot over nothing. When I got older and I took some tests, I found out I had Asperger's Syndrome. It made me feel a whole lot better to

know the reason I acted this way.

I'm glad that my mom and her team are naming a school in honor of my brother, Chase, and building it for little kids just like him and me. I've decided not to go to The Chase Academy because of one thing: my friends won't be there. If I changed to a different school, I would miss all my friends at my middle school. I'm also glad the Chase Academy will be there for me too.

Student of the Month

For the first month, we thought it only fitting to feature the academy's namesake:

Chase Lundell



Chase Lundell
2nd Grade
Woodward Elementary
DeLand

Chase Lundell is seven years old and lives in DeLand with his older sister Karen. Though they fight on occasion, Karen is his best friend. She understands him better than anyone, and often has to explain what Chase

Parents: If you would like your child to be featured in Kids Korner, please send a photo and a brief bio to Eileen Taft, tafte@bellsouth.net.

wants to all the adults. Chase's favorites include cards of all kinds: Yu-Gi-Oh!, baseball, football, and Uno cards are among his favorite collections. He loves to "play" Yu-Gi-Oh! and has three duel decks at home. Chase has four dogs: a golden retriever puppy named Belle, a black toy poodle named Jack-Jack, and two Chihuahuas, Pookie and Goldie. (Chase named Goldie because of her fur color.) Also among his favorites are peanut butter sandwiches and

chips, ice cream, and chocolate. This holiday season, he's determined to try pie – he thinks it just might taste great. Currently, Chase is building a Christmas list that includes all of the Transformers and some of the Dora the Explorer toys (he loves learning Spanish). Chase likes to watch Nick Jr. in the morning and Nickelodeon in the afternoons after school. Some of his favorite shows are Blue's Clues, Danny Phantom, Ben 10, and he simply loves Drake and Josh. Chase's favorite Halloween movie is *Scary Godmother* and *Scary Godmother: The Revenge of Jimmy*. Chase is an excellent singer and reader, and goes out of his way to be friendly to strangers. He's so excited that the Chase Academy is coming, and he can't wait to go to his new school!

Future Home of The Chase Academy seeks National Register Listing

In May 2005, Paul and Susie Holmes purchased the closed South Ridgewood Elementary school. The Chase Academy is proud to have our mission plan to be considered worthy of the Holmes' generosity in providing the school as our future home.

Currently, The Chase Academy is working in partnership with the Holmes' to historically preserve the buildings. As a first step, the Holmes' have submitted the preliminary application to the State of Florida for the school to be approved for the National Register. The Chase Academy was instrumental in doing the research necessary to determine the historical significance of the building needed for the application.

The next step will be to tackle the actual preservation project. Maureen France, former president of Mainstreet DeLand, has offered her preservation expertise to The Chase Academy. She has set up a key meeting for The Chase Academy and the Holmes' to meet with Brian Rand of Jacksonville. Brian has a statewide reputation for his expertise in historic construction and preservation.

The new Heritage Preservation Trust organization and its president, Nancy Zrinyi Long, have also taken our preservation project under their wing. Nancy has shared that she has several members with historical preservation experience that are anxious to get working on the school.

We are also excited about getting the local community involved in our preservation project. Most especially, we are hopeful that many of the elementary school's alumni, former principal's, teachers and staff are still living in the local area and will be willing to volunteer their time to the project. If anyone would like to be put on our volunteer list, please contact The Chase Academy's Director of Funding, Eileen Taft,



South Ridgewood Elementary School - Daytona

at tafte@bellsouth.net or 386/423-7537.

Now, sit back and enjoy a brief journey through time...

On May 1, 1916, Mark & Sheftall Architects, 210 Clark Building, Jacksonville, FL, presented to the Volusia County School Board plans and specifications for 2 brick and 1 frame school buildings to be erected in Daytona. The two brick buildings, initially referred to as "North Ward School" and "South Ward School" in the June 15, 1916 School Board minutes, became known as "North Ridgewood Elementary" and "South Ridgewood Elementary." It is unclear as to how or why the school names were changed as both sets of school names were used interchangeably throughout the 1917 School Board minutes.

The bid for building the three schools was awarded to Florida Engineering Company on June 5, 1916 with a date of completion set to be on or before November 15th. Florida Engineering Company ingeniously won this award by submitting a bid that included one price to build all three schools. Every other company that submitted bids had priced the schools out individually. Florida Engineering's bid undercut every other company's total price to build the three schools. While it is widely believed that South Ridgewood Elementary was built in 1916, in actu-

ality the school's completion did not occur until about May 10, 1917. On July 5, 1917, the Volusia County School Board Secretary was instructed to return to the Florida Engineering Company their certified check for \$125.00, which the Board had been holding as a guarantee for the completion of all minor matters in the three Daytona Public Schools.

According to the Jacksonville Historical Society founded in 1929, Mark and Sheftall Architects were among the most prominent architects in Jacksonville during the century following the Civil War. Born in

Dempseytown, PA, Earl Mark moved to Jacksonville in 1901, and in 1907 began his architectural training in the offices of Henry John Klutho, Jacksonville's most significant architect during the period between the Great Fire of 1901 and World War 1. In 1911, Mark joined in partnership with fellow architectural apprentice, Leeroy Sheftall. A native of Savannah, Georgia, Leeroy Sheftall (1887-1963) also began working in Klutho's office in 1907. Mark & Sheftall had a very successful partnership that lasted twenty-two years, and were credited with the design of many noted buildings in Jacksonville, as well as over fifty schools around the State of Florida. Mark & Sheftall designed buildings in a variety of styles popular during the early twentieth century, ranging from the Prairie School and Bungalows to the Mediterranean and

Tudor Revivals.

At least two of the buildings designed by Mark & Sheftall are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and include the Masonic Temple, 410 Broad Street (1912-16) and South Jacksonville



Victor Earl Mark
(1876—1948)

Future Home of The Chase Academy seeks National Register Listing (continued from page 4)

Grammar School, 1450 Flagler Avenue (1917). In 2004, Rink Partnership Design Inc. received an award from the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Committee for the rehabilitation of the South Jacksonville Grammar School, which is now privately owned and is known as Lofts San Marco.

The South Jacksonville Grammar School was built at the same time and in the same style as the North Ridgewood and South Ridgewood Elementary Schools. The Jacksonville school even has a remarkably similar floor plan to the South Ridgewood school. These schools were built in the "Prairie" style. A small cadre of young Chicago architects, led by Frank Lloyd Wright and inspired by Louis Sullivan, produced an outburst of creativity in the early 1900's (1900-1924) that was brief but unrivaled. This movement later became known as the "Prairie School," for its architecture was inspired by the mid-western landscape, and is one of only a few indigenous American architectural forms. Rejecting the currently popular revival trends, these architects strove for a new American aesthetic in building design. Broad overhanging roofs and strongly defined horizontal lines are the most easily recognized elements of Prairie style residences. Flowing internal spaces, building materials that blend with nature, and horizontal bands of windows are commonly used. Commercial buildings of the Prairie School influence have less horizontal emphasis but demonstrate the same inventive use of form and space as Prairie houses. Ornamentation is usually sparse but intricate. The heaviest concentrations of Prairie style buildings are located in the Midwest, although pattern books helped to distribute vernacular forms of the style throughout the country. Henry J. Klutho, mentor for Mark & Sheftall, became Florida's foremost authority on the Prairie style. An interesting question

is, "How many of the fifty (+) school buildings in Florida that Mark & Sheftall are credited with designing are still in existence?" What we do know is that of the two brick school buildings they designed for Daytona, only one remains standing, South Ridgewood Elementary School. The demise of the North Ridgewood Elementary School occurred in 1987 after St. Paul's Catholic Church purchased the property from the School Board for \$340,000. Demolition of the school began on November 13, 1987, though the church officials had not yet decided how to use the property. Let history not forget the additional school building that Mark & Sheftall designed for Daytona, the frame building, referred to as "colored school" in the June 5, 1916 School Board minutes. Where was it? What has happened to it?

There is one final historical note about South Ridgewood Elementary School whose time has come to be put to rest. In the book, *The Odyssey of an American School System - Volusia County Schools - 1854 to 2000*, published by Volusia County Schools, there is a claim made in Chapter 2 on page 46 that "While Sue Patterson was principal, South Ridgewood Elementary became the first elementary school to have a school library." This claim has also been referenced in articles about the school published by the Daytona Beach News Journal. Extreme due diligence has been pursued to substantiate this claim. The principal writer

and researcher of the book, Patricia Langlotz, says the information came from either the Halifax Historical Society or research cadre member, Angie Forest. Being unable to locate Angie Forest, all files about Volusia County schools at the Halifax Historical Society were researched to no avail. The Daytona News Journal was contacted and early issues on microfiche at the City Island Library were researched for evidence of this information to no avail. The archives at the Volusia County School Board Facilities office were researched. The oldest floor plan available for South Ridgewood Elementary is from 1956, and while there is a library indicated, it is clear to see that the room was originally a classroom converted to the use of a library. The Jacksonville Historical Society was contacted and asked to research its archives to see if it may have the original plans for this school, but unfortunately, it does not. Finally, the Volusia County School Board minutes were researched. There was no mention in the 1916/1917 minutes of this school being built with the first library. Rather, in fact, on October 10, 1918, the minutes discuss the "matter of book shelves for library room in Holly Hill [Elementary] School..." Furthermore, the principal, Sue Patterson, who is attributed to being on staff by *The Odyssey* when South Ridgewood Elementary became the first elementary school to have a library was the school principal from 1936-1963. The School Board appointed Ms. Faye

Rhodes as the first principal of South Ridgewood Elementary School on August 9, 1917. Unfortunately, her name has been overlooked on page 235 of *The Odyssey*. Ms. Lillian Purdy who is credited as being the principal at that time was actually the 4th grade teacher in 1917 & 1918. Clearly, Holly Hill Elementary has the rightful claim over South Ridgewood Elementary for this piece of history, and sadly, Holly Hill Elementary is no longer standing either.



South Ridgewood School - 6th Grade - 1949/1950
Donated to Paul & Susie Holmes by Rich Avaline



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Thank you for your support!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For One Year Membership

I wish to join The Chase Academy in the category of:

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Benefits: E- newsletter, priority notice for all Academy related functions and events, 10% discount on all Academy merchandise

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Join us today as we Chase the Dream!