

F is for Fall Fundraisers!

Letter from the Executive Director

Yes, it is that time once again. I am not talking about the carving of pumpkins, the filling of cornucopias, and the gathering of families at the table. I am referring to the time of year when parents spend time in their communities gathering donations for silent-auctions, fulfill their volunteer hours at community booths and accost their fellow employees with tickets, candles and perhaps a brownie or two!! This year, we have been lucky enough to add two vital members to our Board of Directors: Dave Kolodzik, a successful entrepreneur who has years of experience in non-profit development projects, and Debra West, the former editor of Women's Lifestyle Magazine and our new Community Development Liaison. Between these two, we have a bevy of exciting and diverse fundraising events coming your way, starting this November with our Fall Wine Tasting. ***(See our Calendar of Events for all of our fundraising events).***

On Tuesday, November 9th from 5-7 pm, Peter's Wine Shop and Wine Bar of Port Orange is hosting a wine tasting fundraiser for the Academy. Tickets are \$20.00 per person. This event features the ONE HOPE wine – a specially designated wine labeled with the Autism ribbon, benefitting The Chase Academy. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will include shrimp cocktail, crab claws, and other yummy goodies. The event will include door prizes, a 50/50 raffle and silent auction items.

We are asking each family to sell a **minimum** of 10 tickets for this event. You can check out your numbered tickets from the front office when you sign your child in or out. We also have full-color posters available for you to hang at your place of work, worship, or work-out! Let's get



MIRIAM "MIMI" LUNDELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

the community involved in this elegant and festive occasion as we kick-off our fall season in style!!

Finally, one of our parents has donated a week in a Tennessee Chalet, high atop the Smoky Mountains, as a special raffle event of its own! This item is valued at over \$1200.00, and tickets will be available for purchase (\$5 each) at all of our holiday events, beginning with the Fall Wine Tasting. The drawing for this great prize will be held in April, Autism Awareness Month, at our ***Chasin' the Blues*** event. Remember, the more tickets you buy, the more chances you will have to spend a week in the mountains next summer!

Special points of interest:

- *Fall Wine Tasting at Peter's Wine Shop & Wine Bar in Port Orange on Tuesday, November 9th, from 5 pm to 7 pm.*
- *Become a member of the Parent Advisory Board today!*
- *Schedule your November parent conference meeting with your student's teacher.*
- *We are looking for exhibitors for our first Glitter & Glisten Holiday Bazaar to be held on Saturday December 11, 2010 indoors at the Volusia County Fairgrounds. Early registration offering savings on booth space ends on October 31st. Contact Debra West 386-290-8900.*

Inside this issue:

<i>The SCERTS® Model</i>	2
<i>Kids Korner</i>	3
<i>Parent Advisory Board ~ Parents Required!</i>	4
<i>Sand Art Brownies</i>	4
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	5

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide educational services specifically tailored to meet the individualized needs of students with high-functioning Autism or any of the related Autism Spectrum Disorders and to focus these services on maximizing the students' potential for inclusion into mainstream society.

The SCERTS® Model

Several years ago, in conjunction with my own son's education, I was introduced and trained by Volusia County Schools in a new program entitled SCERTS®. SCERTS® is an acronym for Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports – the major challenges faced by students on the Spectrum. This program was designed by Autism and research experts specifically for children with Autism and not for any other demographic. Dr. Amy Wetherby, a professor at FSU and part of this distinguished team of researchers in the field of Autism, was my trainer. It was through her that I became convinced that this program would be the best curriculum for addressing our students' communication deficits and their ability to control their own emotional regulation. SCERTS® states openly that it is designed to run parallel to any academic program and can only enhance learning.

As most parents know, we have started the SCERTS® assessment process which includes a total of 10 steps. Currently, we have designated each student's communication level: Social Partner, Language Partner, or Communication Partner. Following this we interviewed parents and recorded their data on the SAP Report. We have also spent the last few weeks doing this same report from our own educator point of view. Next in our process is the act of recording data and observations that look at each child's specific strengths and weaknesses. Faculty members will be using the upcoming Teacher Duty Day to evaluate and administer the criteria for these observations before planning each one of 6 for the upcoming 6-week term. Parents will be partnered with for this process as we are required to view the child across at least two environments: school and home are the most natural of the two. Please keep an eye out to schedule a parent meeting following Teacher Duty Day (November 22nd) so that your child's academic progress as well as the observational chart can be completed with you. Teacher's will be posting a conference schedule for you to choose from starting Monday, November 25th.

The SCERTS® Model prioritizes Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support as the core

challenges that must be addressed in any program for children and persons with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The SCERTS® Model is a comprehensive, educational approach and multidisciplinary framework that addresses the core challenges faced by children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related disabilities. The model is derived from a theoretical as well as a research-based foundation on communication and social-emotional

“The SCERTS® Model can be used with children who exhibit a wide range of ages and developmental abilities, including both preverbal and verbal children. It is also relevant for older school-age children and adults.”

development in children with and without special needs. The SCERTS® collaborators draw from over 100 years of collective experience with children with ASD and related difficulties, and have published more than 130 scholarly articles and chapters, as well as books and assessment instruments.

The SCERTS® Model was developed to address the critical need identified by professionals and parents for a comprehensive multidisciplinary team model for children with ASD that addresses educational priorities based on the most current research on ASD. The SCERTS® Model prioritizes goals and implements practices that focus on enhancing Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Supports for children with ASD and related social-communicative disabilities and their families. It is based on research and practice that indicates that educational programming should focus on:

- ✂ developing spontaneous, functional communication and secure, trusting relationships with children and adults (Social Communication)
- ✂ enhancing the ability to maintain a well regulated emotional state for learning and interacting (Emotional Regulation)
- ✂ supporting children, their families, and professionals to maximize positive social experiences across home, school and community settings (Transactional Support).

The SCERTS® Model focuses on func-

tional skills in every day activities

across settings, and is informed by research on the unique learning style of children with ASD. It is not an exclusive approach, in that it provides a framework in which practices from other approaches may be integrated. Assessment occurs through observation of children in different settings and different partners using a detailed curriculum-based assessment and parent report. The SCERTS® Model can be used with children who exhibit a wide range of ages and developmental abilities, including both preverbal and verbal children. It is also relevant for older school-age children and adults. Particular emphasis is given to parent-professional collaboration, and careful coordination across all settings and partners.

The SCERTS® Model is:

✂ **Child-centered:**

Each child's individual patterns of strength and needs guide program planning, including selection of goals and strategies.

✂ **Family-centered:**

Family members are included as collaborators and partners in all efforts, and plans are developed to support families.

✂ **Developmentally grounded:**

The Model and its curriculum is based on extensive research on the development of children with and without disabilities.

✂ **Activity-based:**

Everyday activities and routines are the primary contexts in which children learn, and in which progress is measured.

✂ **Relationship-based:**

The development of trusting and secure relationships with adult partners and other children provides the foundation for enhancing social communication and emotional regulation capacities.

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Please go to the SCERTS® website for more specific information about the model: http://www.scerts.com/frequently_asked_questions.htm.



KIDS KORNER

Student of the Month ~ Skylar Larson



Skylar Larson

Skylar joined The Chase Academy last year as one of our inaugural students. His mom, Karen, took a chance that our program could change the way Skylar views school. Skylar had a history in public school that included meltdowns and escapist behaviors whenever he was confronted with a new or challenging situation. As we all know, public school classrooms are not the best places to exhibit these kinds of behaviors, and pretty soon, Skylar was moved from program to program in search of the “right” environment for his needs. Meanwhile, vital time was passing for Skylar where little or no learning gains were being made.

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@cfl.rr.com. Thank you.

When we met Skylar, we were struck by his innocent curiosity, his exuberance for life and his irresistible countenance. Here was a kid who was hard *not* to love. Over the first few months of school, we worked with Skylar’s parents and his medical team to find the right balance for him. As we headed into the second half of the year, Skylar started using his words to tell us his needs, without running away, and to convey his insecurities about how “hard” the work was. We used lots of praise and reinforcements to show Skylar that he can succeed. We all celebrated the day Skylar started reading; he enjoys reading so much that he often goes into the reading area, picks out a book and sits with it on his own. This success in school led to more confidence for Skylar, and dramatically decreased the number of times he was disregulated.

This year, Skylar has enjoyed tremendous success. He has joined his friends Jimmy and John from last year along with a new friend and student in his classroom, Aaron, where he earns rewards for his behaviors, is learning all kinds of new things and has had no incidences of disregulation at all!! He has found his place at The Chase Academy where he can thrive and grow without feeling threatened, overwhelmed

or insecure. We are all so happy to see Skylar learning.

At home, Skylar has a brother Collin, in addition to his mom and dad, who is very important to him. He also enjoys trains – Thomas the Train, in particular. His newest interest is the Zoombini computer game that teaches him to sort and match. He also enjoys being with his friends to whom he is loyal and supportive. Often he sees himself as a kind of “super hero” defending those in need from anyone or anything that might try to hurt them. He is quite the charmer, and has a quick smile or a hug of sympathy whenever it is needed. We think of Skylar as part of the family.



At Daytona’s Museum of Arts and Sciences

Parent Advisory Board ~ *Parents Required!*

New to The Chase Academy this year is our Parent Advisory Board. This board was created in response to our bylaws which indicate that no parent may serve as an Academy Board member. While we wanted to make sure we limited any conflicts of interest, we did not want to stifle the voices nor the very real contributions made by parents. The Parent Advisory Board is comprised completely of parents. It is designed to support the goals and interests of The Chase Academy families by partnering with the Board of Directors in fundraising and school development projects. In addition, parents can work together on their own to create parent-support programs that work within the community, offering all parents of children on the Spectrum supports that are currently unavailable. We believe parents are the best source for targeting these needs as they

most probably mirror their own. Parent Advisory Board members gather to find real solutions to the issues faced inside our classrooms and the local issues surrounding families with Autism, providing volunteers and strategies for fundraising and scholarships to support the school's growth as well as building a group of leaders within our community to help pave the way for future programs and offerings to all families with children on the Spectrum.

This board has its own leadership: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary and in its infancy, Parent Advisory Board (PAB) members have a chance to create the foundations of this board by creating bylaws, policies and procedures that will keep the PAB a vital part of the academy for years to come. We encourage *all* parents to join the

board, and each family to have representation. Membership and participation is reflected as part of your monthly volunteer hour requirement. The Academy's ***Community Development Liasion***, Debra West, will attend each PAB meeting and will represent parents' interests at all Board of Director meetings. She will keep the PAB informed regarding the answers, priorities and concerns of the Academy's Board. PAB meetings are scheduled for the 4th Monday of each month, so that the parents can get immediate feedback from the Directors, whose meeting is held the 3rd Thursday of the month.

The Parent Advisory Board is designed to be a vital component in the growth and success of The Chase Academy – please join us and consider taking on a leadership role in this new venture.

Sand Art Brownies

Last year's Board President, Janet Fetterman, came up with a great student-parent fundraiser. The Sand Art Brownie is a jar of brownie mix that has the dry ingredients layered and designed to look like a jar of sand art. By adding eggs and oil, bakers can make a scrumptious dessert for their holiday guests. Packaged in a mason jar and topped with red skirting, the Autism ribbon and a recipe card, the Sand Art Brownies are soon to be a staple fundraiser of the Academy. Each jar sells for \$10.00 with all proceeds going back into the classrooms. Last year we sold over 300 brownies, and received emails from out of state raving about our brownie mix!

This year, we have seller extraordinaire, Jess Parker-Anderson, step-mom to Caleb Anderson, heading up our brownie sales. Jess sold about 75 jars last year on her Facebook page. She was selling them faster than we could make them! Jess will be contacting you directly in a short email asking for parents to help with the various components surrounding our student-parent fundraiser.

First and foremost we look for ingredient donations. The more ingredients we can get donated the more profit each jar makes. We need dry baking ingredients, cases of mason jars (currently found at Big Lots for about \$5.00), red material for skirting and Autism ribbon for decoration. We could also use a volunteer to print the recipe cards and labels. Our labels are penned by student David Ortiz who is known for his great handwriting skills.

After accumulating donations for ingredients, we need to coordinate making the jars. Our recipe makes a dozen jars of brownies. We usually take several afternoons a week during the fall season to help the students make these jars. We would like to have volunteers come early in the afternoons to help coordinate, measure, manage and clean-up after our sessions. We would like to coordinate a parent-child brownie creation day on Saturdays, where parents gather for a few hours in the morning to make a few dozen brownies. We would appreciate someone stepping up to help coordinate and plan for these Saturday mornings.

Lastly, we need to get these brownies sold. We provide a jar as a "sample" and have families take orders from friends and co-workers, through Facebook, and at church. We also sell them from a booth at local community events, and parents are needed to help man these booths. Your children are welcome to come too as they are our best marketers! We will have booths at the ***Glitter and Glisten Holiday Bazaar*** and at the ***Winter Wonderland Festival*** this year.

If you know how you would like to help, contact Jess at hometownhound@yahoo.com and tell her how you can help. If you are not sure what you can do but want to do something, she is just an email away. I am sure she can make quite a few suggestions.



Calendar Entry

Fundraising Event

Parent Meeting

October:

Monday, October 11 Columbus Day – School in Session
Thursday, October 21 TCA Board Meeting 5:30 pm
Friday, October 22 Teacher Duty Day – Midterm 1 (*No School for Students*)
Monday, October 25 PARENT ADVISORY BOARD 7:00 pm

November:

Monday, November 1 Sand Art Brownie Sales begin
Tuesday, November 2 Election Day – School in Session
Sunday, November 7 Daylight Savings Time Begins
Tuesday, November 10 WINE TASTING EVENT 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Wednesday, November 11 Veteran’s Day Holiday – No School
Monday, November 15 PARENT ADVISORY BOARD 7:00 pm
Thursday, November 18 TCA Board Meeting 5:30 pm
Friday, November 19 Fall Holiday begins – End of Day
Monday, November 30 School Resumes

December:

Friday, December 10 End of Trimester 1 / Teacher Duty Day
No School for Students
Saturday, December 11 GLITTER & GLISTEN HOLIDAY BAZZAR
Sand Art Brownie Booth
Monday, December 13 PARENT ADVISORY BOARD 7:00 pm
Thursday, December 16 TCA Board Meeting 5:30 pm
Friday, December 17 Winter Holiday begins – End of Day
December 17-19 WINTER WONDERLAND EVENT
Sand Art Brownie Booth

2011 Fundraising Events

Join us today as we Chase the Dream!

Saturday, January 29th
Pearls & Poker formal evening

Saturday, April 2nd
Celebrate World Autism Day at our
Chasin’ the Blues festival

www.TCAofVolusia.org

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