



INNOVATIVE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

September 7, 2009

Friends of TCA:

As we head into our third week of classes, students are settling into the routine and parents happily drop their children off at school without their accustomed tantrums. Why? Because our students are **HAPPY** to be at **The Chase Academy!**

The progress we can record this week has to do with the maladaptive behaviors associated with those on the Spectrum. Many students tantrum or run away when faced with unwelcome circumstances such as transitions and academic challenge. Our students are no different. Our ABA specialist, Jennifer Anton, has worked wonders with our challenging behaviors, and we have noticed what we assess to be a 30% decrease in tantrum behaviors as well as a lessening of their duration. We provide the consistency needed to students to understand their boundaries and we are teaching alternative behaviors which encourage the children to make good decisions.

This is the kind of attention missing in most programs. Truthfully, most programs either offer your student academic rigor OR behavioral guidance and functional skills. Our program focuses on academic rigor which we realize can not be fully potentialized without addressing these behavioral issues. We start with the message that each person is RESPONSIBLE for his or her decisions (no one *makes* you have a tantrum), and then we reinforce positive choices and offer alternative behaviors that will get the student's needs met.

In class we are reading from the **Tree House** series, which is a favorite of mine as well as theirs. It is my favorite because it combines history with fiction and reinforces a love of reading. Each fictional novel is accompanied by a non-fiction book that supports the historical or scientific information necessary to understand the story. This week, we saved a book, or rather a scroll, which contained the story of Hercules from the library of Pompeii on the day (August 24, 79 ad), that Mount Vesuvius erupted. Students were fascinated by the story and we learned so much about Ancient Rome and the historical events surrounding Pompeii.

In Math we are moving into place value by playing games. We are also memorizing our sixes using manipulatives. For Science we have focused on the Scientific Method and we practiced all the steps in our "Heartbeat Experiment" where we tested how fast our heart beats in varying activities from sitting to running. The kids loved it! Lastly, in Writing we are practicing our cursive writing and developing ideas for our Newspaper. This coming week, each student writes their own Newspaper article!

Time is moving so swiftly, and we look forward to more students joining us in October. Please keep us in mind and help us to spread the good news about our program!

Thanks for your interest and for helping us to **Chase the Dream!**

Mimi Lundell