

The Children's Voice

A quarterly publication detailing the children's programs of United Cerebral Palsy and its affiliates: Children's Services Center, Capstone Academy, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida.



Milton Child Care Center's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program Making a Real Difference in Children's Lives

For this Milton graduating class of 2009, the sweet smell of success could be found in cake, candy, and hugs from parents and teachers. Rather than talks of college and employment, trains and safaris were the topics of choice for those walking the aisle. That's because these were not graduating seniors, but five-year-olds celebrating the completion of their VPK activity.

The Milton Child Care Center graduated 18 children from two VPK classes in May (pictured below and right). Throughout the school year the children attended VPK every weekday morning from 8:30 – 11:30. During that time experienced teachers taught the children their letters, sounds, and beginning math skills. The children practiced fine motor skills such as using scissors, pencils,



markers, and paints. Science and social studies were also taught.

"Equally important the children learn the appropriate social skills needed to get along in life such as how to make friends, how to follow classroom rules, how to function in small and large groups, how to share and take turns, and how to be independent, noted Gayle Brecke, Center Director. "The children learn through play and direct instruction," she continued, "Their strengths and weaknesses are assessed and addressed as the year progresses. Our goal is to guide the children's learning and prepare them for a successful kindergarten experience."



The Milton Child Care Center has just started a new summer VPK class of ten children that will have an accelerated rate of learning taught by a teacher with a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. We look forward to promoting another successful group of children that are ready for kindergarten.

(Please see related article *VPK Statistics* on page 3.)



OUR MISSION

To enhance the quality of life for infants, children, youth, and adults of all abilities and encourage acceptance and inclusion within our communities.

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Board Chair: Dr. J. Ben Renfroe
President/CEO: Dr. Sherry A. White
Principal, Capstone Academy:
Thomas Harrell
Executive Director, CSC: Becky Kirsch
Executive Director, DHHS: Justin Stanley
Director, Milton Child Care Center:
Gayle Brecke
Editor: Nancy Wolfe

A NOTE FROM BECKY



My daughter Mayumi said something the other day that set me to thinking about happiness. What exactly does it mean to be happy and what can we do to help increase our own happiness?

In researching I found that many great thinkers and philosophers addressed the issue of happiness. A majority of them seemed to indicate that living your life with purpose created a path for happiness. Leo Rosten had an alternative position. "I cannot believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. I think the purpose of life is to be useful, responsible, and compassionate. It is, above all to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made a difference that you lived at all."

I think you will find throughout this issue of the Children's Voice that United Cerebral Palsy and Children's Services Center have found a myriad of ways to help our staff, volunteers, and donors be useful, responsible and compassionate by providing worthwhile services to infants, children, youth, and adults with and without disabilities.

The Milton Child Care Center (page 1), Our Time (page 5) and Capstone Academy (pages 5 and 7) are providing quality, compassionate programs for children with and without disabilities.

The Swan Intensive Behavioral Home (page 3), and the Sugar Land TEC Group's "Gizmos" Project (page 7) are bringing innovative programming for youth. And, Survival Skills for Women's classes (page 6) will be bringing important information to help women improve their lives.

Christmas in July

Clothing Collectible Santa Figures

Santa Charity Sale

Wednesday & Thursday
July 15 & 16
4:30 pm—7:30 pm

United Cerebral Palsy
Of Northwest Florida
2912 North "E" Street
Pensacola

Over 120 Unique Designs!
Finely Detailed!
\$20 each! (plus tax)
\$24 to \$68 Values!

For information: Christina or Trudy, 432-1596
Proceeds to benefit United Cerebral Palsy Nursing Services

Much of this would not be possible were it not for our volunteers (page 4) and our donors (pages 6 and 7). There are additional ways you can continue to be involved, such as voting for UCP at the Pelicans Games (page 7), attending our golf tournament (page 4) and purchasing some of our Santas at our Christmas in July Charity Sale.

I disagree a little bit with Leo Rosten. I believe we can have both happiness and purpose. In fact, I found that many great thinkers believe that we gain happiness through helping others, especially children and those most in need. Please continue to be happy by making a difference for others.

Becky Kirsch

Watch our progress!

We've been telling you about two exciting new projects that we are starting to support our communities' families -- the Swan Intensive Behavioral Home and a second Capstone Academy for children with and without special needs in Milton. We thought you might want to see some pictures of our progress!



Pictured left and below, a welcoming bed and quiet place for a tired boy and a great space to socialize and play video games.



The Swan Intensive Behavioral Home for adolescent males with developmental disabilities and behavioral challenges



Pictured left, a sure-to-be-well-used kitchen stands ready for adolescent boys with developmental disabilities and behavior challenges at the Swan Home.

The new school in Milton



Pictured above, renovations are in progress to develop a rich educational environment to meet the needs of children with and without disabilities.

Florida VPK Statistics (from cover)

More and more states are developing VPK programs, and Florida continues to document the success of its program. In February 2009 the Florida Department of Education and Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation announced that more than 140,000 kindergarteners are better prepared for success in the classroom as a result of Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program. According to the 2007-08 VPK Readiness Rates, 54 percent of students who completed Florida's VPK program last year demonstrated overall classroom readiness compared to 42 percent of students who did not attend VPK.

UCP Honors Volunteers through National Victory 100 Award

United Cerebral Palsy believes in the strength of its volunteer network and values volunteers as the working core of the UCP family. The organization was founded through the efforts of volunteers and we continue to build on that strength.

The National UCP Victory 100 Award recognizes the dedicated volunteers for their many hours of hard work and support they give local UCP affiliates across the country.

We submitted the names of our volunteers who have a minimum of 100 hours of service during 2008. Everyone submitted was honored at the Awards Dinner during the 2009 United Cerebral Palsy Annual Conference in San Francisco this past April.

Victory 100 Honorees

John Asmar – Board Member
 Jacqueline Atkins – TEC Center
 Anna Barbee – Board Member
 Todd Cooper – Group home
 Chris Davidson, Target 9 Mile Road- Capstone
 Collette Dowlatkhah – Group home
 Robert Fair – Board Member
 Michele Fielder – Board Member
 Ann Harvey – TEC Center
 Mike Hill – Board Member
 Jimaco Hollis – Adult Day Program
 Melissa Jordan – Milton Child Care Center
 Todd Larson, Old River Optimists – Capstone
 Barry Lintner – Board Member
 Teresa Raymond – Capstone Academy
 Dr. J. Ben Renfroe – Board Member
 Aunt Jewell Snuggs – Group Home

Mark your calendar for these fun and important upcoming events!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Merges with UCP



**Friday
 September
 18th
 Scenic Hills
 Country
 Club**



**July 17
 from 5 - 7 PM
 Seville Quarter**

On June 15th, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Northwest Florida (DHHS) officially merged with UCP.

This merger represents both a marriage of two agencies with a long history of serving their respective communities, and a unique opportunity for DHHS to expand its scope beyond Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. “We’re thrilled to work with UCP. Their expertise and leadership among the nonprofits in this area is second to none,” said incoming DHHS Executive Director Justin Stanley.

DHHS will provide a range of services for the area’s deaf and hard-of-hearing population, including deaf advocacy, supplying adaptive technology, sign language interpreters, and vital training to government institutions such as the Escambia and Santa Rosa County Sheriff’s offices, the local and federal courts, and school districts throughout Northwest Florida.

Proceeds to benefit the clients and programs of United Cerebral Palsy and its affiliates.



From the Principal's Desk

It has been my pleasure to be a part of the United Cerebral Palsy team for the past five years. The good work that is being done through this organization is incredible and it is a blessing to the clients to have such a dedicated, loving staff to take care of them each day.

The general public is probably very unaware of how many lives are touched in so many wonderful ways through the great programs of UCP. The support given to infants, children, youth, and adults carries with it a professional approach with a tender touch – two things that are paramount to progress in a client's development. To see this work in so many areas on a day-to-day basis has been a blessing to me and it reassures me that this agency will continue to hold the banner high for those with special needs.

I have the utmost respect for the entire UCP family and wish the very best to all. Please give Mr. Harrell the same support you have given me over the past five years.

Thank you.

Charles Thomas, Principal (retired)
Capstone Academy

Spotlight on



Tracy Burke

Who is that smiling from behind her desk at the UCP offices on North "E" Street? Tracy Burke! Tracy currently works as a registered nurse at UCP but is transitioning to become the Manager of the Swan Intensive Behavioral Home.

In her new position at the Swan Home, Tracy will oversee the operations of the home, making sure the young men have nutritious meals and snacks, appropriate medical oversight, and plenty of diverse activities and outings. "I've always wanted to manage a residential home," notes Tracy. "I am excited to be able to play an important role in helping adolescent boys with developmental disabilities and behavior challenges lead successful lives."

Tracy hales from the home of *The Office* – Scranton, Pennsylvania. She has been married for 43 years and has six grandchildren. She now lives in Perdido Key where she enjoys fishing and spending time with her grandchildren in her free time.

Our Time After School Program Gearing up for a Fun-Filled Summer

Our Time is the unique program for children in the 1st through 12th grades with special needs and disabilities. This important program provides a great place for children who are not able to stay home alone while their parents work during the summer. An exciting summer is planned for Capstone's Our Time Summer Camp. Students will be going on field trips to the IMAX Museum, several local parks, Krispy Creme Donuts, and the Rave Movie Theater. If you know a child that would benefit from this program but whose family may not be able to afford the care, state subsidies for school aged children attending the program may be available.

Our Time is a program of Capstone Academy 4901 W. Fairfield Drive Pensacola. Phone 455-5437.

Thank you Donors and Volunteers February - June 2009

Heroes

First United Methodist Church
Milton
Gayle and Barry Brecke
Gerald and Patricia Medders
Susan O'Connor

Champions

Abhaya Yoga Center
Dr. Bonnie Bedics
First United Methodist Church,
Milton, Men's Club
Frieda Aubin
St. Paul United Methodist
Women

Advocates

Becky Kirsch
Brother Joseph Maguire
Charlotte Crane
Chick-Fil-A, Nine mile Road
Dorothea O'Neill
Dr. and Mrs. Marian Marinescu
Gannett Foundation Match
Gulf Coast Concrete Structures
Mary Beth Williamson
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Fitzgerald
Nancy Padgett

Friends

Marie Brecke
Thomas and Georgianna Bryant

In Kind

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Brian Bell
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Caryl Jewell
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Mary Beth Williamson
Michele Casey
Michelle Mull
Myra Marler
Nancy Wolfe
Navy Gateway Inns and Suites
Pam Huggins
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Pensacola High School Key Club
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Rebecca Lee
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Sandra and Barry Brubaker
Stephanie Pennington
Tara Gulsby
The Delicase
Tricia Kruse
Trudy O'Brien
Tulsa Morein

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Dick & Laverne Baker
Anna Barbee
Bonnie Bedics
David & Jeannette Chandler
Dr. Charles & Shirley Kraselsky
Deborah McIntyre

Exciting Partnership brings Survival Skills for Women to Milton

Milton women will now be able to gain the skills they need to get through hard times thanks to the generosity of the Milton United Methodists Women's Circle. When the group learned of Children's Services Center's desire to offer a Survival Skills for Women series to women in the area, they stepped right up and said "We can help". The women of the circle will provide refreshments, child care and the classroom space for the ten session, thirty hour class.

Survival Skills for Women is a nationally recognized, research based curriculum that provides participants with the tools they need to establish and maintain healthy relationships and lifestyles. The course provides classroom and hands on learning experiences on topics that include

assertiveness, personal health, nutrition, money management, child management, self-advocacy, legal rights, coping with crisis, community resources, and employment. Previously, Children's Services Center has only been able to offer the class in Pensacola.

"Our mission has been to provide resources to enhance the lives of children and women. This program certainly fits our mission and we know there are women in Milton who will profit from this experience," noted UMW member Hilda Cox.

Plans are being made to hold the series in the fall. The class is free to participants. If you or someone you know would be interested in attending, please call 595-5919.

Gizmos Give Students Something to Chew on

Gumball machines can mean serious business! Students at United Cerebral Palsy's TEC (Transitional Employment Center) are learning important business skills as they plan for the distribution and maintenance of two dozen Gizmo Jr. gumball machines (pictured right). The project, Sugar Land TEC Group, is funded through The Able Trust, and will create a revenue-generating small business for these hard working individuals.



TEC provides students ages 14-21 with computer and job skills training including resume building, interview training, and now operating a micro-business, to develop employability skills.

TEC students are currently looking for child-friendly locations to place the machines. If you have a potential location, please call Brian at 432-7477.

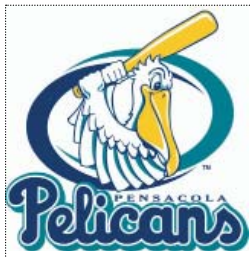
Pilot Club Contributes \$2500 to Help Persons with Special Needs

UCP was excited to accept a check for \$2500 from the Pilot Club of Pensacola in May. The funds will be used to help individuals with developmental disabilities become and remain more independent.

"The Pilot Club's mission is to improve the quality of life in our local community and throughout the world," notes member Jeanne Clark. "The club holds several fundraisers throughout the year, the largest being a pancake breakfast in March. Funds from the breakfast are distributed to local non-profits providing brain-related services."

The Pilot Club also does many service projects including book distributions, sponsorship of an ARC birthday party every month, and completion of a Make a Difference Day project for UCP.

"We have enjoyed a shared vision with the Pilot Club for many years," notes Pam Huggins of UCP. "We are incredibly grateful for their quiet but generous support of individuals with disabilities."



Pelicans Fans!

Help United Cerebral Palsy win \$10,000.00 by voting for UCP at Pelicans' Games!

Ballots listing participating non-profit charities are given to each attendee at every Pelicans' baseball game. The organization with the most votes at the end of the season wins \$10,000!

The winner will be announced at the game on Sunday, August 30. In addition, one lucky fan who completely fills out the survey card will win \$1,000!

Meet the new Principal at Capstone Academy



There's a new face at Capstone Academy. Mr. Thomas Harrell (pictured left) has joined the school as Principal. Mr. Harrell comes to us after retiring from the Escambia County School District with 36 years of experience. He is a proven educational leader who puts children first in all decisions.

Recognized as "Principal of the Year" in 2006, Principal Harrell has served as teacher, principal and District Administrator. We are excited to welcome Thomas Harrell to Capstone Academy. We know the children will find a true friend and leader in him.

United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Florida Inc
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Pensacola, FL 32501

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Please join us in helping our communities' families!

Yes, I want to support the important programs of United Cerebral Palsy and Children's Services Center.

_____ Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____. (Checks payable to Children's Services Center.)

_____ Please bill my Visa/Mastercard \$ _____. Account # _____ Exp. _____

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In accordance with Florida Statute 496, a copy of United Cerebral Palsy's official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free within Florida, 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state.