



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES

Brightening the lives of people with autism

"Watching the students filtering in from the buses, we could see that they felt like they were at home, in a safe place, and loved..."

- Parent of a new student on their visit to the school.

Welcome Message from Ward Todd

President, Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce



Ward Todd

I am honored and delighted to welcome the friends, family, volunteers, staff and supporters to this edition of the Center for Spectrum Services

Newsletter. My relationship with the Center and co-founders Susan Buckler and Jamey Wolff goes back more than 30 years. I was privileged to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees at the Center (1987-1994) which gave me an understanding, insight, and appreciation into the marvelous accomplishments at the school, improving the lives of youngsters on the autism spectrum.

That relationship with Spectrum Services has continued to grow over the years since I joined the staff of the Ulster Chamber, where the Center has been a proud member since 1985.

Annually, the Chamber partners with the Ulster County Economic Development Alliance to select Ulster County's most outstanding businesses, business leaders, and organizations. At that time we also honor an individual or individuals who have made a significant impact on our region's quality of life and who help make Ulster County a great place to live and work. We consider these individuals to be the 'heart' of our community, thus the name, "The Heart of Ulster County Award." We were so proud to give this award in 2011 to Susan Buckler and Jamey Wolff. Their contributions to Ulster County have been nothing short of amazing!

Ward Todd

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

"Because together, we are stronger..."



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES
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April is Autism Awareness Month, and Spectrum Services has many ways for everyone to get involved in helping to raise awareness about our Hudson Valley loved ones with Autism. Join us, and become an Autism Awareness Advocate! We'll have fundraising events, knowledge-drives, and ways for you to support Hudson Valley children with autism who attend Spectrum Services.

Join our Autism Awareness Month Facebook Fundraiser

For Autism Awareness Month, use your Facebook page to help raise funds to support the life-changing work done at Spectrum Services. Donate, get your friends involved, too, and share this on your own page! Let's make a difference in the lives of our special little learners! See instructions on how to create your own fundraiser inside this issue!

Come to "A Taste of Spain" Food & Wine Pairing: An Autism Awareness Event

Friday, April 12th - From 7-11pm at The Chateau, in Kingston
Bienvenido a España! Join us for a celebration of Spanish cuisine



and wine, as we take a culinary tour of select vintages and expertly prepared dishes. We'll start the evening in Madrid, with a wonderful cocktail hour and stunning tapas and hors d'oeuvres, and then it's off to Barcelona for dinner.

We'll also have a silent and live auction teeming with items you'll want to bid on! This special fundraiser unites the culinary skills of The Chateau with the masters of wine knowledge and lore from Stone Ridge Wine and Spirits. Visit our website to make your reservations: www.centerforspectrumservices.org

Visit Our "Through the Lens of Autism" Photo Exhibit at Ulster Savings Bank

Our friends at Ulster Savings Bank are once again hosting Through the Lens of Autism, a photo exhibition from photographs taken by Spectrum Services students in our program of the same name. The exhibition will run the entire month of April, and will be displayed at Ulster Savings Bank's Wall Street branch.

Autism Awareness Art Exhibition

For Autism Awareness Month, Center for Spectrum Services is organizing an Autism Awareness Art Show featuring artwork by our students. This year the exhibition will include artwork by siblings and family members. The exhibition is being held at Arts Society of Kingston (ASK), located on Broadway near the Kingston waterfront. Take in the unique life perspectives of our students and their families!

MEET THE STAFF

Niels Hoyt

Niels Hoyt, who has been at Spectrum Services for 31 years, is Lead Behavioral Specialist in our Kingston School, overseeing a staff of dedicated behavioral specialists whose chief task it is to provide therapeutic intervention and crisis prevention to our classrooms. This means when a student is having behavioral issues in the classroom, or the gym, or the hallway, the behavioral specialist team, using state-of-the-art methods at working with children with autism, are called to de-escalate the situation, and help the student self-regulate, calm down, and get back to learning.

“Niels plays a pivotal role in the daily life of our students,” says Dr. Cheryl Engel, Spectrum Service’s Clinical Department Head. “For our students to learn and grow, a calm, stable environment is necessary, and Niels and his team work to ensure that environment exists.”

As our key Behavioral Specialist, Niels also provides annual Safety Care trainings to all Spectrum Services staff, making sure each classroom-based staff member knows the best way to soothe and defuse situations when a student’s behavior needs guidance. In fact, Niels has been a Certified Trainer of Psychological and Physical Management Training (PMT) for seven years, as well as a Certified Trainer for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) for 14 years. He’s also had extensive training in Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP).

Niels enjoys time with his wife and children, and is an actively involved grandfather of ten.



Niels Hoyt

MEET THE STUDENT

Caitlin Cowperthwaite

Caitlin Cowperthwaite is a vivacious 13-year-old who attends the Peace Program provided by Dutchess BOCES, and is a participant in one of our Social Skills Groups; part of Spectrum Services Outreach program. The groups, led by Sharon Koczaja, LCSW, focus on learning and refining the skills necessary to develop and maintain relationships including initiating friendships, increasing connectedness with others, and building self-advocacy skills.



Caitlin Cowperthwaite

“Caitlin has come such a long way,” says Koczaja, “and has made so much progress in terms of social skills development, especially in knowing how to be make new friends, as well as being a genuine friend.” In fact, Caitlin has created a strong ‘people file,’ meaning she knows what other students in her group like to talk about, and asks them questions and engages them on their own likes, not necessarily her own. Koczaja adds that this level of maturity really reflects Caitlin’s compassion and empathy for others.

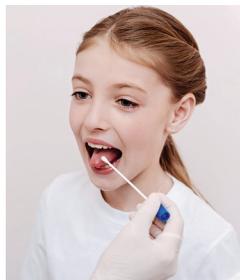
Parents Gary and Tricia are very proud of her. Says Caitlin’s mother, “I am so delighted with her progress. The program has made such a difference in her life and ours.”

Caitlin really likes animals, specifically wild animals, and maintains a strong knowledge of species and classifications. On her downtime, she’s an avid Minecraft Gamer, and enjoys listening to ABBA, especially her favorite piece...Dancing Girl.

Spectrum Services Partners with National Institute of Health on New Study: Can a DNA Saliva Test Detect Autism?

Spectrum Services has been supporting a National Institute of Health (NIH) research study by SUNY Upstate Medical University and Quadrant Biosciences Inc.

The study is validating a saliva-based diagnostic test for autism by looking at small particles called microRNA in the saliva of children with autism. These particles may help us better understand some of the changes in the brains of children diagnosed with autism.



Just as important, though, they might allow for earlier diagnosis, and therefore earlier intervention, which means earlier access to services. As experts in the field of autism, Spectrum Services has known for decades that early diagnoses and intervention are key to making the greatest difference in a child’s quality of life as they age.

So far, sixty Spectrum Services students have joined over 500 children participating in this research study, and preliminary results are extremely promising.

Music to the Ears: Local Businesses and Foundations Support Vital Music Therapy Program

Spectrum Services families are grateful to a number of businesses and foundations who in the past several months have donated funding so our students can continue receiving music therapy. This salient program has had many benefits and positive impacts on our students.



Students have regular class time with the music therapist, and those in need of one-on-one sessions have access to those, too. Students who need more experiences in social skills and working with others, receive music therapy in small groups. Our music therapist also works with students alongside their speech therapist, using rhythm, music, and the latest methods in speech therapy for children with autism.

Says Jamey Wolff, Spectrum Services Program Director, “The program, vital and beneficial to our students as it is, does not receive full funding, and we rely on the generosity of these benefactors who understand its value.”

We’re grateful to the Klock Kingston Foundation, administered by our friends at Key Bank (\$15,000), Bob Siracusano of Sawyer Motors (\$5,000), and the Hammermand Family Foundation (\$3,000).

Student Field Trips Sponsored by Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley

Our friends at Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley have donated over \$1,100 to fund several of our class’s field trips to a number of educational venues. These include the Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum in Poughkeepsie, Nichol’s Riding Club for equine therapy, and other locations in the Hudson



Valley. “Many of our students have special needs when it comes to where they can go on field trips,” says Phyllis Bliss, Spectrum Services Kingston

Program Coordinator,” and this funding allows us to choose and tailor these field trips to meet our students’ needs.”

“It’s through a grant from the Dyson Foundation,” explains Kevin Quilty, Community Foundation’s Vice President for Ulster County, “that we can offer our Field Trip Grant program, and we’re delighted that Spectrum Service’s special students can also take advantage of this funding.”

Spectrum Services is most grateful for Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley in helping to provide these life-experiences to our students.



Climbing to Success

Through the generosity of the Ellenville High School Girls’ Softball Team, who raised over \$3,000, our Ellenville School was able to install a climbing wall for their students. A climbing wall has many benefits for our students, including body awareness, balance, physical exercise for strength and endurance, social skills building, and most importantly, a feeling in our students of self-accomplishment.

Through the Lens of Autism Program: Support from Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union and Stewart’s Shops

“Through the Lens of Autism” is a photography series that is particularly beneficial to our students with autism.

Taught by Deborah DeGraffenreid, a local professional photographer



MHVFCU Business Development Officer Michael Campbell presents Spectrum Services Program Director Jamey Wolff a donation as part of the Credit Union’s 12 Days of Giving.

specialized in working with children with special needs, the program is currently in its ninth year. “Many of the students in the program are non-verbal,” says DeGraffenreid, “and the majority of them struggle with communication.” With the lens of a camera, children who participate can share how they see the world.

As part of their 12-Days of Giving program, Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union made a generous donation to support “Through the Lens of Autism,” which, along with a similar generous donation from Stewart’s Shops, assures the program can continue this year, helping our students show us how they see the world around them.

“We couldn’t be more grateful to our friends at Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union and Stewarts Shops,” says Susan Buckler, Spectrum Services Co-Founder and Administrative Director.

You Can Help, Too!

It might be easy to think with this level of corporate support, our funding needs might be met. But, truth be told, vital funding needs still exist, and the majority of donations that we receive come from individuals just like you.

Please help by donating today on our website – www.centerforspectrumservices.org.

fundraise with facebook

For April’s Autism Awareness Month, use your Facebook page to help raise funds to support the life-changing work done at Spectrum Services. Setting up a fundraiser is as easy as A, B, and C

- A)** First, log into your Facebook page, find on the upper right of your page the dark blue, downward arrow that clicks your pages dropdown box. In that, you’ll see “Create Fundraiser,” and click on that to bring up the Create a Fundraiser pop-up box, and then click “Get Started.”
- B)** On the next box, you’ll be given options on who you’re raising funds for, from which you’ll click the middle option for Nonprofit, which opens a box allowing you to select what nonprofit. In the text box up top, type “Center for Spectrum Services,” which will bring the Spectrum Services fundraising option. Click that, and choose how much you want to raise, and when your fundraiser should end. We suggest the end of April, so it runs throughout Autism Awareness Month.
- C)** That opens the “Tell your story” box, which already has text, but which you can edit to tell your story. Perhaps you’re raising funds in honor of someone you love, or maybe you have a birthday or celebration coming up, and instead of gifts, prefer donations to your fundraiser. Then, your next option is to choose a graphic, and we suggest the Spectrum Services Logo. Then, click “Create” to start your fundraising.

Spectrum Services thanks the following businesses for their support of our students through Annual Sponsorships.



Center for Spectrum Services is a not-for-profit organization designed especially for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. We are approved by the New York State Office of Education of Children with Disabling Conditions and the New York State Health Department.

Since our inception in 1976, Spectrum Services has served as a model special education program. With two centers located in Kingston and Ellenville, our outreach extends to children and families from throughout New York's Hudson Valley. In addition to our educational programming, we also operate the Spectrum Services Outreach Program, providing comprehensive diagnostic evaluations to children, adolescents, and adults in the community. It also offers Social Skills Groups, individual counseling, and professional and family trainings and workshops.

Annually, we attract hundreds of visitors, sponsor trainings and seminars for professionals and families, and are nationally recognized for our leadership in the field.

KINGSTON
845-336-2616

ELLENVILLE
845-647-6464

www.centerforspectrumservices.org