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*"We are blessed with amazing teachers and therapists who understand Brenden, and the uniqueness of our family's needs. This is why my family supports Spectrum Services by helping to raise needed funding to support the school; not just for Brenden and his peers." Deborah, Mom to Brenden*  
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## Introduction: Oliver Shiels, Gold Class Student



I first started school at Spectrum Services about four years ago, so I was about 8 years old,

and now I'm twelve. When I got here, my brain was like, this is not like a normal school, and even the layout was not what I was used to. It was confusing at first, and not just because it was a new school, but how I was treated; like, I was accepted.

I've learned a lot, and not just about school stuff, but a lot about myself. I've learned skills that have made things a lot less stressful. Before, if someone said no to me, I would get angry and just sit and be mad. But now, if someone doesn't like something I'm doing and says "no," I can wave it off, take a breath, and say, "okay, whatever."

Being on the autism spectrum has its pluses and minuses. Like, one of the minuses is that I sometimes have to think really hard and long to get to an answer. A plus is that I notice stuff other people miss, or don't see at all, and so I pick up on things most others can't.

I'm aging up, and this is my last year at Spectrum Services. This makes me feel sad, because I like... in fact...I love being here. Even the food is great!

Spectrum Services has been awesome. The main thing here are the teachers; they're great, and they make it the best experience ever. I'm really going to miss them and the school.



**JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE 45 YEARS!**  
 We're saluting our 45th anniversary with a grand event, including a superb dinner, the honoring of our accomplishments, and recalling our roots.

## Join Us as We Celebrate 45 Years!



We'll start with a Meet and Greet hour with fine hors d'oeuvres and open bar of select wines and beers, in addition to a cash bar for cocktails. Superb dining will follow with a dinner menu crafted especially for the occasion by The Château's master chef.

You'll enjoy an online, silent, and live auction, raffles and door prizes, historical perspectives, and friends of Spectrum Services both old and new celebrating together.

## Honoring Our Founders

Jamey Wolff & Susan Buckler

## Master of Ceremonies

Bill Calderara

## Live Auctioneers

Bob Siracusano & Ray Tucker

## An Evening of Celebration

6:00pm - Welcome Reception & Silent Auction

7:00pm - Dinner in the Crystal Ballroom

8:00pm - Honoring our 45 Year History

9:00pm - Live Auction

Tickets are \$135 for this milestone occasion.  
 Make your reservation TODAY at [www.centerforspectrumservices.org](http://www.centerforspectrumservices.org)  
 Appropriate Covid practices will be followed.

## April is Autism Acceptance Month

Spectrum Services will have many ways for everyone to get involved in helping raise awareness and acceptance of our Hudson Valley loved ones with Autism.

*Continued on page 3*

**AUTISM**  
**ACCEPTANCE**  
**MONTH**

**Because together we are stronger**



**CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES**  
 Brightening the lives of people with autism

## Meet the Staff

### Cheryl Engel, Ph.D.

You would be hard-pressed to find a more respected, admired, and fondly held staff member than our own Cheryl Engel. A licensed Clinical Psychologist and certified School Psychologist, Cheryl specializes in Autism Spectrum Disorders. She has a deep history of working in mental health clinics, various school settings, and with special needs populations.



Cheryl Engel, Ph.D.

Cheryl joined Spectrum Services in 2007 as a Clinical School Psychologist. Now as Clinical Department Head, Cheryl supervises all social workers, psychologists, and behavioral specialists, and is closely involved with all classroom staff and students.

Providing counseling, social skills training, and behavioral support services to students, Cheryl also conducts trans-disciplinary assessments and diagnostic evaluations. In addition, Cheryl provides specialized training to our staff, and consults to schools and agencies throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley.

"Cheryl is phenomenal in her positive interactions with our students, parents, and staff members," says Leah Siuta, Family Service Department Head. "She is truly a compassionate and loving therapist who understands the individual nuances of autism spectrum disorders as well as each child's unique personality, skills, and needs."

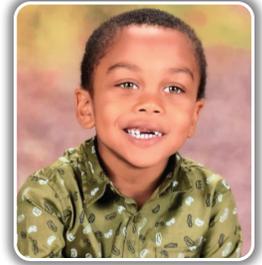
Perhaps this is because of Cheryl's own personal experience of parenting a child on the autism spectrum, making her a passionate and dedicated advocate to helping families understand and better address their child's autism, while aiming to emphasize the unique characteristics and strengths those with autism spectrum disorders have to offer.

Siuta adds, "Cheryl gently guides the students and our staff with not only research-based best practices, but also with a humanistic approach, which brings out only the best in all of us."

## Meet the Student

### George "Noah" Byrd

Noah was three years-old when he started at Spectrum Services in Ellenville. He needed support in many areas including language, socialization, and motor skills. The Jade classroom staff and Noah's parents collaborated and got to work immediately. Slowly, Noah's skills began to improve.



George "Noah" Byrd

In early 2020, COVID caused our school to go into remote learning. So many students with autism struggled to adapt to this form of learning. However, there was a small percentage of students that did well—Noah was one of them.

"Noah seemed to thrive while we were remote. His parents knew that for their son to succeed while out of school, they'd have to be his teacher and therapists," says Sandra Brownsey, our Ellenville Program Coordinator.

Noah's parents worked to implement strategies they were learning on-line through his therapists and teacher. Both parents carried these plans into their daily lives, and Noah's father, George, would send videos of their long bike rides in the neighborhood, across gravel and even up hills. Noah was active, engaged, and learning.

When school reopened for in-person instruction, Noah was ready. At age six, he is asking questions, identifying the letters in his name, and riding bikes on the playground with his peers. Noah's favorite task is being a teacher's helper, and he enjoys returning the lunch cart to the kitchen and leading circle-time. Noah has grown in so many ways. This fall he will be returning to his school district in Port Jervis. We're so proud of him!

## Klock Foundation Supports Our Students with \$25,000

Spectrum Services recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Klock Kingston Foundation to implement three specialized learning programs that are going to be "game-changers" for our students.

### The Klock Kingston Foundation

Two reading programs that have both proved their mettle in teaching students how to read, especially those who learn differently than others. A mathematics program was also included, which works very well for children on the spectrum, most of whom are visual, auditory, and tactile learners who need to 'do' to learn.

Along with our grant request, the Klock Kingston Board approved an additional \$15,000 to support our students on the spectrum. The grant and the additional funding were received with more gratitude than we can put into words. Thank you Klock Kingston Foundation!

## Carve for a Cause Provides a New Awning



When our friends at Carve for a Cause heard our pre-school wing's entrance didn't have a protective awning over it like our other awnings, they didn't hesitate granting the funds to build one.

The new enclosed awning is protecting, shielding, and sheltering our students and staff as they come and go during the day.

It keeps them dry in times of inclement

weather, away from blowing winds, and shaded on hot, sunny days. Thank you, Carve for a Cause!

## Generosity in Our Own Back Yard: Eric Sasso

This past holiday season, Eric Sasso of Saugerties, and Sales Consultant for Sawyer Motors, made a sizable contribution to support our students by using his sales commissions. This generous donation was then matched by Sawyer Motors' proprietor Bob Siracusan, and between the two, \$6,000 is helping support the amazing work we do for our students with autism.



## Stewart's Shops Supports Arts for Autism Program

A big shout out to Stewart's Shops for funding a new "Arts for Autism" program for our students on the autism spectrum.

This monthly arts therapy program will be taught by a local artist with experience in working with children with autism. The majority of our students struggle with communication, and through art, the children who participate in this amazing program will engage in a variety of art-making experiences, giving them a unique outlet for expression.

## Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley Funds Staff Training

We are grateful to Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley for funding training for our staff on a fascinating speech therapy methodology for children on the spectrum called Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). This training provides our staff with additional tools to teach non-verbal children how to communicate. We know the immense joy that comes when a breakthrough is made and a student finally starts communicating with loved ones and staff.

## Plan to Go "Spectrum Blue" – Thursday, April 28

Join us Thursday, April 28th for Spectrum Blue Day, as we honor our friends and loved ones during Autism Acceptance Month. Post photos of you and your family wearing blue, the color representing autism awareness. Create your own fundraiser, and help raise funds for our students. Write a few words or post a video of why you're honoring a loved one with autism. Tag them all with #spectrumservicesblue. More information is on our website, [centerforspectrumservices.org](http://centerforspectrumservices.org).



## CBD Basket Raffle – Saturday, April 23

Our friends at Your CBD Store Kingston are hosting a raffle fundraiser. They've put together a well-designed basket of CBD products worth over \$350. Tickets are \$5 each, or 5 for \$20, and can be purchased at their store at 1220 Ulster Avenue, Space B, in Kingston. Then, on Saturday, April 23 at 3pm, there will be a grand prize drawing at their store to draw the winning ticket (winner doesn't have to be present to win).



Your CBD Store  
Kingston

## Joey Eppard Virtual Benefit Concert – Thursday, April 28 at 7:00pm



Joey Eppard is a renowned music writer, recording artist, and the lead vocalist and guitarist for the experimental progressive rock band, 3. Joey's son, Julian, is a student at Spectrum Services. To help raise awareness for autism, and to help raise funds for Spectrum Services, Joey is holding a live Facebook concert as part of our Go Spectrum Blue day, Thursday, April 28th. Thanks, Joey!

## Designer Handbag Bingo – Saturday, May 7 at 7:00pm

Beekman Park  
Recreational Center,  
Hopewell Junction -  
\$40 Tickets



It's BINGO, and you're participating for a chance to win a designer handbag while enjoying a fun night of fashion and design. Over \$7,000 in top name designer bags will be awarded to game winners. Tickets make a great Mother's Day Gift!

## Join Us for Autism Acceptance Month!

- Facebook Posts and Sharing – Month Long by Everyone!
- Informational Webinars and Knowledge Drives, check out our website.
- Create your own fundraiser to support our students.

More information at  
[www.centerforspectrumservices.org](http://www.centerforspectrumservices.org)

## Parent Workshops Provide Vital Information

Spectrum Services outreach to families affected by autism is well anchored in the belief that parents and caretakers are a vital part of the team of educators, therapists, and clinical staff behind their child's success. One part of this outreach are our Parent Workshops, where our expert Therapists, Family Service Coordinators, and other clinical staff offer seminars on various topics to inform, instruct, and educate parents with children on the spectrum.

"Our Parent Workshops are crucial to families who might recently have had their child diagnosed with autism," says Leah Siuta, Family Service Department Head, "and also prove highly informative to families who have long been on the autism journey." Workshops are conducted by Spectrum Services' expert staff, whose

backgrounds and education are steeped in working with special needs children.



Workshops on topics of interest to caregivers include *Supporting Your Child's Independence*, *Toilet Training for Your Child with Autism*, and *Teaching Children to Ask for What they Want*. "We thoughtfully develop topics for workshops that reflect the very questions our families are asking us," Siuta adds. "Workshops are open not only to Spectrum Services families, but anyone who has a special needs child can benefit from the information we provide."

Funded in part by a grant from the NYS Office of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), upcoming workshops are listed on the Spectrum Services website at [centerforspectrumservices.org](http://centerforspectrumservices.org).

## Remember to Like Us on Facebook and Stay Up to Date on Our Events

We'll share important information, give you heads up on autism events in the area, facts and information for you to share with friends and loved ones about autism, and more! Speaking of social media, have you connected with us on Instagram?

***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 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](http://www.centerforspectrumservices.org)