



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES

Brightening the lives of people with autism

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

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"Attending your school made a major difference in Jordan's life. You never gave up on him, and with your help, he's succeeded beyond our wildest dreams and recently graduated from SUNY Delhi with a Bachelor's of Technology. We're so proud of Jordan, and thanks to the foundation your school provided him, he has a bright future."
- Matthew & April, Jordan's Mom & Dad.
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From Our Executive Director

As the months wind down towards my retirement at the end of June, I am filled with a whirlwind of emotions, as well as gratitude and nostalgia as I recall that day in September 1976 when Jamey Wolff and I co-founded The Children's Annex. We opened the door of our first classroom at the Dutch Reformed Church in Woodstock with two students, driven by our shared passion to create a supportive environment for children with unique educational needs. Together we embarked on an extraordinary journey. From modest beginnings, our organization has grown and flourished, touching the lives of thousands of students and their families. After 47 remarkable years dedicated to serving individuals on the autism spectrum, it is time for me to retire as Executive Director.

Throughout my career, I have been honored to work alongside the most dedicated and compassionate individuals at our schools in Kingston and Ellenville, and in our wider community. Together, we have witnessed amazing milestones, celebrated triumphs, and forged lifelong bonds with the incredible individuals and families we have had the privilege to serve.

Many of them will join us on April 20th at our Autism Acceptance Month Dinner as we raise awareness to promote autism acceptance, to celebrate each individual's unique differences, and to foster inclusivity and connectedness. I invite you celebrate the accomplishments of these past 47 years and my retirement. Please see the information to the right for details on how to share in the celebration.

To each and every one of you who has been a part of this journey—thank you. Your unwavering support, dedication, and passion have been the driving force behind our success. As I reflect on my years at Spectrum Services, I am filled with pride in knowing the legacy created by Jamey and I will continue to thrive and continue to positively impact the lives of children on the autism spectrum.

Susan Buckler, Executive Director

Center for Spectrum Services

Annual Autism Acceptance Month Dinner

Saturday, April 20th - 6pm-10pm
Wiltwyck Country Club, Kingston NY



**Honoring Retiring Co-Founder
Susan Buckler**

Join us as we honor Susan, while saluting Autism Acceptance Month

We'll start with a Welcome Reception with delectable hors d'oeuvres, select wines and beer, and a cash bar for cocktails. Superb dining will follow, with a dinner menu especially crafted by Wiltwyck's master chefs.

We'll come together to honor Susan, a pioneering spirit whose compassionate leadership facilitated shaping Spectrum Services into the esteemed organization it is today.

Enjoy a silent auction, raffles, special guests, and more. All supporting local children on the autism spectrum.

Master of Ceremonies
Ward Todd

Pledge Drive Host
Tony Marmo

Special Guest Speakers
Colleagues, Friends, and Family

An Evening of Celebration
6:00pm - Welcome Reception, and silent auction displayed for bidding.

7:00pm - Dinner Served in the Main Ballroom

8:00pm - Celebration, saluting Autism Acceptance Month, and supporting local children on the autism spectrum.

Join Us!

Tickets are \$140 for this milestone occasion. Make your reservations TODAY at centerforspectrumservices.org

Plan to Go "Spectrum Blue" – Tuesday, April 2nd

Join us on Tuesday, April 2nd 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 that represents autism awareness. Create your own fundraiser on Facebook, and help raise funds for our students. You can also write a few words or post a video of why you're honoring a loved one with autism. Make sure to tag them all with #spectrumservicesblue, and find more information on our website, centerforspectrumservices.org.

Go Spectrum Blue on April 2nd for Autism Acceptance Month



AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH Because together we are stronger



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES
Brightening the lives of people with autism

Meet the Staff

Christopher Hoffmann

Chris has been the Special Educator in our Teal Class for three years now, having relocated to the Hudson Valley from his native Long Island, where he earned his master's in Special Education from Touro College.

Chris brings a very positive approach to his students and his teaching staff. "Growing up, there were times school was hard for me," admits Chris, "and so as a teacher, when I go into class each day, I think about how I want to balance what my students need in all their areas." Chris and his team strive to make each student feel comfortable, and have positive thoughts about school. Chris adds that what makes him very happy is if his students not only make progress on a given day, but that they've also enjoyed the day.

"I've worked with Chris for over three years," says Theresa Collishaw, Teal Class's Lead Teacher Assistant, "and he has brought out the best in both the students and the staff. His leadership has allowed everyone to excel and has created an exceptionally welcoming environment."

Rebecca Kenol, Education Department Head, agrees. "Much of the success of Chris's students are because he's always so ready to make his staff feel engaged and involved, and knowing he's provided them the best tools to work with each student."

What motivates Chris? "It's extremely encouraging when a student finally gets it, which is why we do what we do. We put our best efforts into achieving academic goals, and eliciting those "aha" moments. How can one not feel overjoyed for this little individual who's just achieved a major milestone in understanding or capability? It changes their life."



Chris Hoffmann

Meet the Student

Brenden Sinon

Brenden has been a student at Spectrum Services since 2017, when he entered our Pre-School Program. Since then, he's had an amazing journey of growth and development, and is now in one of our more senior classes.

"Brenden has grown and blossomed since he became a student in my class in 2022," says Tiffany Fielding-Clarke, his Special Educator, "when it was difficult motivating him without a few challenging behaviors, but now he follows directions, and works independently." In terms of learning, Brenden's great at math, and working on factors up to 6, and shows a propensity to counting money and making change.

"In terms of social skills," says Fielding-Clarke, "he's become quite the conversationalist, and will sit and chat with one of our Teacher Assistants at length about his weekends, and new trains he's seen, and he's more often making requests for help, and better expressing himself."

Brenden's parents are excited about what they see, too. Says Debbie, his mom, "Brenden can be easily described as a happy, considerate, and spirited boy, who is gently emerging as a social butterfly due to the immense increase of his meaningful communication skills."

Debbie remarks that family and friends see Brenden's abilities increasing every day, and that his entire team at Spectrum Services have consistently dedicated their time and energy to increase his skills. "Our family cannot thank Spectrum Services enough for getting him to the level he is at today."

Debbie adds, "the sky's the limit for this guy and, hey, if you need any questions answered about trains, Brenden is your guy. He's a rail fan at heart, and you might say it definitely 'keeps him on track.'"



Brenden Sinon

Community Support

Donors, Just Like You

Although Spectrum Services receives grants, corporate and business sponsorships, and funding from charitable organizations in response to its fundraising, the vast majority of funds donated each year comes from individuals just like you. That's right, your individual donation to support our students, when joined with so many other generous donors, makes up a high percentage of our fundraising dollars. So, remember, your donation, no matter the size, joins others in creating a pool of support that touches the lives of each of our students on the autism spectrum. Visit our website, and click Donate Now.

Klock Kingston Foundation Provides Art Lessons to Our Students

A \$20,000 grant from the Klock Kingston Foundation is helping Spectrum Services establish a permanent Art Program for our students on the autism spectrum. The benefits of art education to individuals with autism are many, and allow people with autism to use their already visually-minded brains to communicate through artistic media. Through the use of art, individuals on the spectrum can express ideas and process memories they might otherwise not be able to do verbally.

Funds are being used for a dedicated art instructor, Gillian, who works closely with each classroom in planning projects, selecting various media to work with that will best stimulate sensory awareness of our students on the spectrum, improving social skills, and heightening communication skills using art.

Art education provides opportunities for positive experiences that can translate into enhanced classroom performance and increased ability to gain from educational services. Art education can also be adapted to support academic, social, speech and language, or emotional goals and objectives.

Annual Sponsors Support Our Students with Autism

Our Annual Sponsors are a major part of an entire year of important fundraising. They not only support the life-changing services and programs for our students with autism, they also gain valuable outreach and marketing for their company or business. In return, our students and their families know they're receiving only the best in programming centered on educating children with autism. Please see the list of our Annual Sponsors on the back mailing side of this newsletter. If your business is interested in becoming an Annual Sponsor, please call our Development Office at 845-336-2616, Ext. 165.



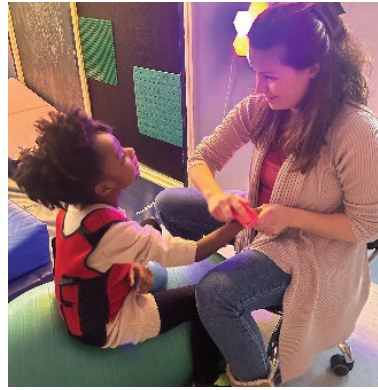
With a generous \$20,000 grant from the Klock Kingston Foundation, we now have an Art Program, with Gillian, our new Art Instructor

Our Ellenville School Makes Occupational and Physical Therapies Fun

Working with our OT/PT Staff, our Ellenville Team has been very creative in coming up with fun ways for our students to build strength, endurance, and coordination.

Noah enjoys riding a scooter on his belly, and matching colors. He is working on tummy and neck strength and coordination while engaging in a fun activity he really enjoys.

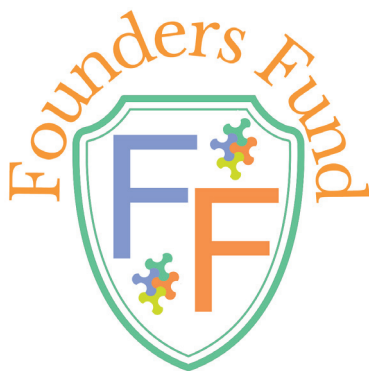
Our OT/PT providers create calm and nurturing environments to



help students get ready for more challenging tasks. For instance, as shown here, therapist Melissa is brushing Joy's arm while working on balance and core strength by sitting on a rounded cushion.

Says Ellenville Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Forte, "as we like to say at Spectrum Services, 'play is child's work,' and our

OT/PT team has mastered the art of creating playful, engaging activities to help our students achieve goals and have a lot of fun in the process."



An Investment in Our Students & Staff

A portion of funds raised this year at our Autism Acceptance Dinner will be to support our Founders Fund. Created in 2022 to honor Spectrum Services founders, Susan Buckler and Jamey Wolff, its Board of Trustees, through a unanimous resolution, created the Spectrum Services Founders Fund.

The Fund is used to help offset emerging expenses that exceed the reach of NY State funding associated with providing educational and therapeutic services to our students.

Funding is also used to help maintain a professional workforce that is second to none in delivering the latest educational strategies and cutting edge therapies to students on the autism spectrum, and providing an internal pathway to leadership within the organization. For more information about the Founders Fund, visit our website.

**fundraise with
facebook**

For April's Autism Acceptance 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.

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?

You can impact the life of a local child with autism!
Making a donation is as easy as going to our website centerforspectrumservices.org, and clicking the Donate Now button at the top of the page.

Spectrum Services Annual Sponsors



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 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. We also offer Social Skills Groups, individual counseling, and professional and family trainings and workshops.

Annually, we attract hundreds of visitors, and are nationally recognized for our leadership in the field.

KINGSTON
845-336-2616

ELLENVILLE
845-647-6464

centerforspectrumservices.org