



ISSUE No. 5: FALL/WINTER 2009

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The Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood

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His Second Act

Early Intervention Program helps child with Asperger's Syndrome achieve success on stage and in life

by Karen Taylor



Peter at age 5 in front of the Lucy Daniels Center



Peter at age 11 performing King George III in "Revolution Rock"

Witness his performance on the stage, and you might never know that, as a three-year old, he was so unnerved by social dynamics that he would bark at people instead of speaking. Watch him put on a costume and assume a British accent, and you'd probably not suspect that he was once unwilling to make eye contact with his teachers. See the young man Peter Winstead has become, and you might not quite recognize the struggling little boy he used to be.

For much of that progress, his parents credit the Early Intervention Program at the Lucy Daniels Center (LDC).

In the early years of his life, Peter—an only child—often behaved in ways his parents found odd. "Our son was a very strange two-year old," says his mother, Hope. "Considering that most two-year olds exhibit unusual behavior, that's saying something." Hope remembers that Peter was easily upset by loud noises and struggled to interpret social cues. Leaving the house took arduous preparation. "We had to micro-manage every outing because his responses could be so unpredictable," she says.

Peter struggled to adapt to the social demands of the preschool his parents placed him in when he was two. Believing that a preschool with a stronger emphasis on social skills was what Peter needed, the Winsteds enrolled him

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MISSION STATEMENT:

The Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood provides and promotes a model of service which exemplifies optimal emotional, social, and cognitive support for young children, parents, and child development professionals.

Dear Friends of the Lucy Daniels Center:

There is a great deal of valuable research and information available about children's mental health these days.

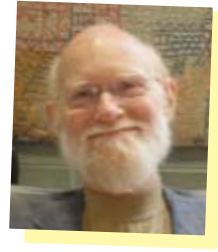
Knowing that many parents and others concerned about young children like to stay informed, the Center is once again partnering with Carolina Parent magazine to provide you with summaries on some of this work in child development and mental health, along with our commentary and interpretation. We launched a new Lucy Daniels Center blog called Mental Health Matters! in September that is simultaneously posted on the Carolina parent website, www.carolinaparent.com, and the Lucy Daniels Center website, www.lucydanielscenter.org.

The approximately weekly posts have covered topics such as: international adoptions, paying attention in kindergarten, risks of TV watching, and more. We invite you to enter the blogosphere and check out our newest community service!

Sincerely,



Donald L. Rosenblitt, M.D., Executive and Clinical Director



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His Second Act

CONTINUED FROM COVER

in the three-year-old classroom in the Childhood Enrichment Program (CEP) at the LDC. The Center's educational staff quickly noticed the difficulties Peter was having in the classroom and asked for the guidance of Dr. Barbara Snider, an LDC psychiatrist. After observing Peter in the classroom, she recommended placement in the Center's Early Intervention Program (EIP), where Peter could get more support in learning appropriate behaviors and coping skills.

It was a crucial intervention at a critical time in Peter's development. "The EIP provided our son with the help and guidance he needed," his mother says. "The teachers helped him learn how to navigate a preschool classroom at his own pace." The low teacher-to-student ratio helped. "They eased him in, accommodated his interests. He was allowed to find his way in dealing with his issues... so that later on he was able to rise to the challenge of regular life and succeed," she says.



Peter (R) as Mr. Bundles in the musical "Annie, Jr."



Peter (R) doing a mission simulation at Challenger Learning Center space camp

The Center also provided vital support for Hope and her husband, Mark. "No one at Lucy Daniels ever treated us like we were weird or strange," Hope remembers. "They... never made us feel like bad parents." At a time when the public understood little about Asperger's Syndrome—the neurological disorder Peter was eventually diagnosed as having—the expertise of the clinicians at the Center provided much-needed understanding for the entire family. "Our weekly meetings with Dr. Snider helped us learn coping strategies and created a sense of hope for Peter's future," Hope says.

Now nearly 12 years old and flourishing at a school with an integrated arts focus, Peter is smart and opinionated, loves computers, and relishes theatrical roles that, in his words, are "memorable and make people laugh." In the school's drama program he has found an environment that encourages his strengths and helps him cope with his continued lack of optimal social skills. He still struggles in decoding many social cues—it may not always register with him that he has said something that has upset someone, for example—but he is appreciated by his teachers and his peers for his hard work and talent.

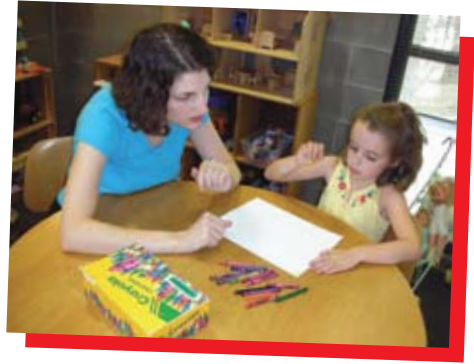
Center Executive and Medical Director Donald Rosenblitt notes, "Some children come into this world with neurological differences that affect their ability to live in conventional society. With early intervention of the type the Center offers, these differences will often be much less extreme, and the children can grow into confident and capable adults, taking great pleasure from their capacities and unique gifts."

The early intervention and acceptance provided in his preschool years at LDC have played an essential role in Peter's success, the Winsteads believe. "The Center really helped Peter come to terms with how his brain works, with his version of reality, so he could move forward and feel confident," his mother says. "He has known for a long time that he has Asperger's Syndrome and just incorporates that into his unique self-image. He likes to be different than everyone else."

Professional Collaboration Program

For clinicians in the Family Guidance Service, the “gold standard” becomes standard practice

By Karen Taylor



Although he wasn't sure what to call it at first, Donald Rosenblitt, M.D., executive and clinical director of the Lucy Daniels Center (LDC), was quite certain of the value of what he has since dubbed the “professional collaboration program” enjoyed by the clinicians who work in the Center's Family Guidance Service (FGS).

“Because working in psychodynamic therapies is such a complicated endeavor, therapists have a long tradition of having collegial discussions about our work—ideally, with someone at a more senior level, although that's not strictly necessary,” he explains. “Yet, in the reality of the world, this kind of professional development often doesn't take place because of the time and expense involved.”

But thanks to the generosity of experienced mental health practitioners in the Triangle, this sort of collaboration has become standard practice at the LDC. Within a collaborative, collegial relationship, these highly respected clinicians offer their time and expertise to further the professional growth of the Center's FGS therapists and, hence, the success of the children who come to the Center for services.

Paul M. Brinich, Ph.D, is an adjunct clinical professor in the departments of psychology and psychiatry at UNC-Chapel Hill and a private practitioner of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. He meets weekly with FGS staff members to discuss their cases—within the boundaries of patient confidentiality—and to “offer my own observations and make occasional suggestions” about their work. “Since there is rarely only one way to proceed, we try to come up with a good path and perhaps a couple of alternatives,” he explains. “The value of the work has a lot to do with forcing the clinician to articulate what he or she is hearing, seeing, saying, and doing.”



FGS's Jamie Miller, Psy.D., notes that having a senior colleague serve as a sounding board has been essential to her growth as a therapist. “Gaining objectivity and understanding therapy dynamics is a process and not something that can be taught in a class, but rather is a personal journey and process that parallels the work that is being done [with patients],” she says. “My confidence has increased dramatically, which is then conveyed through my work. This, of course, is vital for the children and families to trust me through this challenging and difficult process.”



For Allison Ballew, Ph.D., the opportunity to engage in such collaboration was a significant factor in her accepting a position with the FGS. She notes that clinicians often feel isolated because it is difficult to explore treatment options or discuss cases with colleagues informally due to concerns regarding confidentiality. Having the opportunity to talk with a fellow practitioner “in a protected way,” she says, “provides a forum in which to discuss these clinical points.” The more direct

relationship also provides a different dynamic from the typical classroom sessions for continuing licensure. “Our meetings always give me new ideas,” she notes. “Working one-on-one helps me be thorough and feel confident in my work.”

The commitment of time and resources is no small thing, as Dr. Rosenblitt notes: the Center must create space in the therapists’ weekly schedules for these meetings, and the outside consultants give their time on a pro bono basis. Last year alone, the value of donated services was nearly \$150,000. But it’s well worth it for the children who receive mental health services through the FGS.



Landrum S. Tucker, M.D., a member of the LDC board, has worked with clinicians in the FGS for several years. He characterizes the Center’s services as unmatched in depth and quality—in large part due to the network of experts the Center has developed to support its work.

“The Center provides the most thorough psychoanalytic evaluation of preschool and elementary age children in the southeast,” he notes.

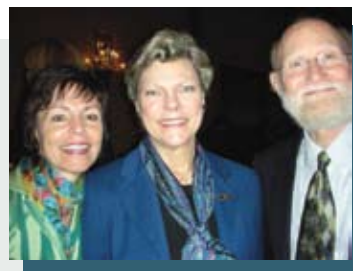
“The work with them is supervised, discussed frequently by leaders in the field, and, through the Center’s connection with other psychoanalytic preschools and centers throughout the nation, the children have access to the mutual sharing of ideas by experienced researchers and clinicians....”

Dr. Miller agrees, concluding that the ultimate beneficiaries of this program are the families who come to the FGS. “Children learn about themselves, understand and accept feelings,” she says. “Families gain better understanding of their children, find better ways of supporting them, and hence they grow closer and form healthier and more loving relationships.”

LDC’s Secure Path Program Receives \$25,000 grant from the Women’s Network

The Lucy Daniels Center was one of four nonprofit organizations to receive grants in 2009 during the Women’s Network’s annual luncheon held on October 26 at the Umstead Hotel in Cary. The \$25,000 grant received by the Center will be used to support the SecurePath program, providing in-home therapy to young children and their parents from low-income families.

The Women’s Network of Wake County is a program of the North Carolina Community Foundation and is



Cokie Roberts, center, guest speaker for the Women’s Network luncheon, pictured with Joyce Watkins King, left, and Donald Rosenblitt, right

designed to maximize women’s leadership in philanthropy by engaging and educating its membership, increasing charitable contributions and strengthening the Wake County community through the impact of collective giving.

Thank you to Our Donors!

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Dean McCord, board vice chair,
Joyce Watkins King, and Donald
Rosenblitt celebrate the funds
raised at the Band Together event
(see page 7 for more info)

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The Lucy Daniels Center is grateful for gifts of all kinds in support of our mental health programs for young children and their families. We regret that we don't have room to list everyone here.

*To make a donation or volunteer, please call 919.677.1400 x120
or visit www.lucydanielscenter.org.*

Band Together Event sets Fundraising Record

On June 6, 2009 Band Together (BT) hosted an amazing fundraising concert in downtown Raleigh to benefit the Center. This partnership resulted in over \$140,000 being raised from more than 90 sponsors and 2,700 attendees in spite of a slow economy. The dedicated team of volunteers that comprise Band Together is exceptional in every way. They devoted themselves to understanding the mission of the Lucy Daniels Center and making it their own as they shared our story and sought support from the community. BT is a testament to the power a group of volunteers can have to inspire others to give and get involved, even during difficult economic times.

In addition to presenting incredible concerts, BT builds community between sponsors, volunteers, and music lovers. They inspired the Center's board, advisory board, staff, and parents to rally together around a common goal. The funds, community awareness for children's mental health, and positive energy generated from this event have given the Center a new base of support that we can build on for years to come!

The Center encourages you to support and thank the corporate and individual sponsors listed here. For a complete list of supporters, please visit the Band Together website, www.bandtogethernc.org or the Center's website, www.lucydanielscenter.org



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Lucy Daniels Center Chosen to Receive GlaxoSmithKline First Annual IMPACT Award

The Center has been selected to receive one of nine GlaxoSmithKline's IMPACT Awards. This includes an unrestricted grant of \$40,000 to be given at an awards ceremony on December 10, 2009, at GlaxoSmithKline's headquarters in Research Triangle Park.



The GlaxoSmithKline IMPACT Award is a competitive process among charitable nonprofits whose primary mission is access to healthcare in the North Carolina counties of Chatham, Durham, Orange and/or Wake. A panel of healthcare delivery experts and GlaxoSmithKline representatives determined the winners based on a strong demonstration of ongoing success in providing access to healthcare; commitment to serving people in need; facilitation of healthcare delivery; creative partnerships and policy development; and a solid record of achievement, management and leadership. For more details visit the GlaxoSmithKline website at www.gsk-us.com.

We look forward to providing you with photos and more information about this prestigious award in the Center's new online newsletter, *Connect Online*. You can subscribe to *Connect Online* on the Center's homepage or by e-mailing Patti Wilt, pwilt@lucydanieliscenter.org.