

P.G. Chambers School – *Discovering the unique potential within every child.*

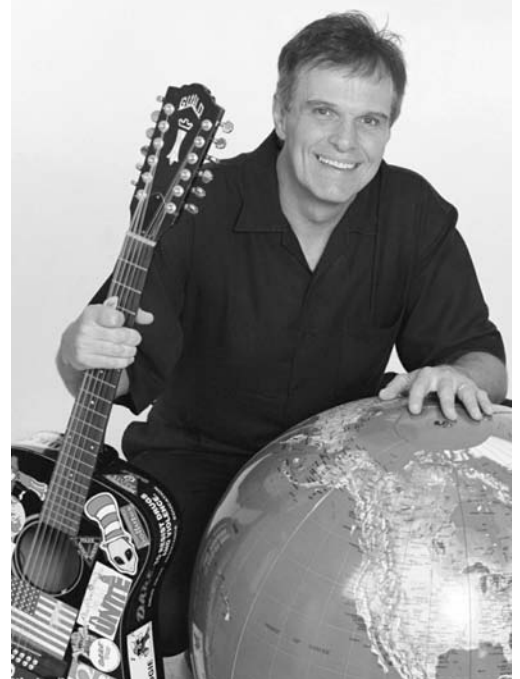
## Second Annual Concert In The Park

*Join us on A Musical Journey Around the World!*

**O**n Saturday, June 11th, P.G. Chambers School, will host it's second annual **Concert In The Park** to benefit the school's *Hear My Voice Art and Music Therapy Program*. This year's Concert In The Park invites us to join teacher, musician and guitarist John Kelleher, "Johnny The K," on a musical journey around the world. The event is a celebration of the progress the children have made as a result of our Art and Music Therapy Program, as well as a fundraiser to support the program in the 2005-2006 school year. This is a very special event for the children and their families, and we could still use your support. *Please see our wish list on the back of this newsletter for ways that you too can help.*

For children born with developmental disabilities, grappling with a body that refuses to respond, a sensory system that deceives the brain, or a communication process that is in disarray can leave a child feeling frustrated, discouraged, and with a low self-esteem. Traditional forms of therapy such as physical, occupational and speech therapies, all designed to help children with developmental disabilities, have been offered for many years at P.G. Chambers School. Recently, however, art and music therapy have proven to

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*Families will join "Johnny the K" on his musical journey around the world on June 11th at the P.G. Chambers School Concert in the Park.*

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## Hear My Voice through Storytelling

### *P.G. Chambers School Art and Music Therapy Program*

*By Kelly M. Bretz, M.S., CCC*

**T**hroughout the month of April, storyteller Mary Rachel Platt, joined the P.G. Chambers School in a 4-day Artist in Residency Program, *Empowerment through Storytelling*, a component of our *Hear My Voice Art & Music Therapy Program*. Mary showed staff how to use storytelling to bring language, imagination and creativity to the children by introducing the staff to tales from other cultures, discussing techniques that bring those tales to life, and helping teachers and therapists understand how to apply those techniques in classroom and therapy settings.

Mary brought ancient tales to life by placing the listeners, teachers and students, in the center of the action. Students enlivened the tales with movement, sounds, masks and other props they had prepared during their school day. The excitement in the children's faces was contagious. Our Speech Therapists worked closely with teachers, staff, students and Mary to coordinate how each individual student could best communicate their tale. P.G. Chambers School's philosophy of total communication (using gesture, sign language, voice, and pictures) fit

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# Victoria Talks About Therapeutic Listening

By Karen Z. Kowalski, M.P.H., OTR/L

**H**! My name is Victoria and I am a student in Ms. Joy's afternoon preschool class. This is a picture of me listening to one of my special CDs that is a part of my **Therapeutic Listening Program**. Karen, my OT (Occupational Therapist), told my Mommy and Daddy that Therapeutic Listening would be good for me to use as a part of my sensory integration diet to help me get my mind and body stronger so that I can do better in school.

I listen to a new CD every two weeks for thirty minutes two times each day. There are fourteen CDs that can be used. Karen picked seven of them to be used as my special program. Some kids use the program during school, but I use it at home. My therapists, parents and teacher write notes about my progress. The CDs that I listen to are different than any that you have ever heard. The music is specially designed, or "modulated" to highlight the tones that provide exercise to my inner ear.



*Hi! My name is Victoria and this is a picture of me listening to a CD that is a part of my Therapeutic Listening Program.*

Karen says that the auditory system provides the foundation for the organization of all other senses and for learning. It actually stimulates my middle ear, central nervous system and autonomic nervous system to help me organize my thoughts and help me pay attention to my environment. I need to wear special headphones which filter out certain sound frequencies, but I can still hear everyone around me.

Karen says this program can help me develop many skills, such as motor coordination, spatial orientation,

bilateral coordination, emotional state, self-regulation, and sensory defensiveness. When I was first adjusting to the program, I had some difficulty sleeping, but that problem stopped. Each person will have a different response to the program so it is important that someone like Karen, my OT, coordinate and direct the program.

My Mommy says that since I have been on the **Therapeutic Listening Program**, I have been more animated, louder and alert to my surroundings.

She also says that I answer questions more quickly, have improved my attention span, talk in longer sentences, and have a better vocabulary and memory. Mommy says that this program has opened up a whole new world for me. It has strengthened my existing abilities and has provided me with new abilities that I never had before. She is especially proud of how I communicate now!

I am almost finished with the program. Karen will decide whether I should start the program over again or if I should listen to the CDs in a different sequence. The good news is that I can keep listening to my music and getting my mind and body stronger at the same time. A few of my friends at school are also doing this program and more would like to start. I'm sure glad my school had this program for me.

P.G. Chambers School's Occupational Therapy Department would like to put together a lending library of headphones, portable CD players and CDs so other children can try the Therapeutic Listening Program. One complete program costs approximately \$250. If you would like to create more opportunities for other children who need this program, you can help by making a tax-deductible donation to P.G. Chambers School and indicate it is for the **Therapeutic Listening Program**.



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*This publication is designed to promote awareness of P.G. Chambers School programs, services, accomplishments and needs. For more information about P.G. Chambers School, call 973-829-8484.*

## Hear My Voice through Storytelling

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perfectly with Mary's philosophy of storytelling; use of voice, inflection, gesture, movement, and sound. Through use of total communication, the students are motivated and excited in knowing that their voices are heard.



*With Mary Rachel Platt's help, students reenact *The Name of the Tree* story using art, animal sounds and musical instruments.*

In addition to working with our staff and students, Mary was pleased to meet with many of our parents. 'When people gather to hear stories, their imaginations take shape within the tale, allowing the teller and listeners to collectively unlock secrets, to share an adventure and a vision,' says the dynamic Mary Rachel Platt. The school was so pleased to share this experience with teachers, parents and our students so that Mary's teachings can be carried over into the classroom, our students' lives, and their homes.

Mary Rachel Platt offers storytelling workshops and residencies for children and adults with a focus on how to use language, voice, gesture and movement to transform story images into a spontaneous and rich telling to an audience. She performs at schools, libraries, colleges, corporate seminars, public concerts, bookstores and private gatherings. Accompanying Mary in her teachings was Jumpstart President Susie Schub. Funding for this special program was provided by proceeds from *Concert in the Park* 2004.



*Staff participating in Mary Rachel Platt's workshop learn how art can support communication and the storytelling process.*

## Love, Rules, Consistency and Consequences!

**O**n March 10th, the Judy Center (Down Syndrome) Team from Hackensack University Medical Center provided a workshop entitled *Behavior Management for the Child with Down Syndrome*. Sixty parents, staff and child study team members attended this informative workshop. Many thanks to the Judy Center for sharing its knowledge with those in attendance.

Dawn Fontana, R.N. at P.G. Chambers School, provided an in-service at which she highlighted the main points of the seminar for School staff members who were unable to attend the workshop. Staff were encouraged to remind parents to first rule out health and medical issues before dealing with behavior management. Secondly, there should be a basic understanding that limited language and family dynamics also affect behavior at home and at school. Dawn emphasized that all children want and need love, rules, consistency and consequences. Having these elements present in both home and school environments gives children a needed structure to their lives. Children *want* to please us, and we can use that to our advantage.

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## Applause

**S**pecial Thanks to the **Henry H. Kessler Foundation** and the **Children's Home Foundation** for their support of P.G. Chambers School *ACT for Kids*, **Assistive Communication and Technology Program**.

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## Theatre Tickets Available for *La Cage Aux Folles*

*P.G. Chambers School Auxiliary Hosts New York City Theatre Trip*

**W**e invite you to enjoy the company of some of our dearest and long-time supporters by joining them on their trip to New York City on Wednesday, June 8th to see *La Cage Aux Folles* at the Marriott Marquis Theatre on Broadway and 45th Street. The cost is \$110, which includes bus fare and theatre ticket, or \$130 if you'd also like to join the Auxiliary for lunch. The tour bus departs at 10am from the Bottle King Parking Lot in Morris Plains, which is located at the junction of Route 10 and Route 202. The bus returns to the Bottle King Parking Lot at 6:00pm. Please call Auxiliary Theatre Party Chair Ruth Kalish at 973-887-3636 to reserve your seat, or for additional information.

# It's not whether you win or lose, it's how determined you are to achieve your goal.

By Miriam P. Cohen, PT, DPT and Rebecca Addo-Nartey, PT

*"Let me win but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."* In 1968, this oath was used in the first International Special Olympics held in Chicago's Soldier Field and has been used by athletes ever since. Started, in large part, by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics has focused on offering individuals with intellectual and physical challenges the opportunity to compete in a variety of athletic events, at the local, regional, national and international levels. The athletes who compete in these games participate in games that are in-line with other international competitions. For those who have been fortunate to see these athletes in the midst of the Special Olympic Games, it is an inspiration. There are truly no limitations to the potential of any athlete; all that is required to succeed is the will to compete.

P.G. Chambers School has been involved in the Special Olympics at a local level for some time. Our students have been athletes in a variety of events, and their parents and our staff have joined them as coaches and cheerleaders. From bowling to basketball, swimming to track and field and skiing, our students have shown their tremendous skills and



*P.G. Chambers School athletes proudly display their gold medals after the giant slalom race.*

determination as athletes. We share in the excitement of the games as our athletes return to school with their ribbons, medals and amazing stories.

The competitions that our students continue to participate in remind us that the importance in life is not whether we win, but how determined we are to achieve our goal.

## Professional Development Conferences

By Nancy Altshuler, PT, Conference Coordinator

**D**id you know that teachers, therapists and other professionals from around the country attend professional development conferences right here at P.G. Chambers School? Last year, we hosted ten professional continuing education conferences. More than 100 of our own therapists and teachers and 300 outside professionals attended. On-site educational opportunities assure a high level of professional skill, ensuring that staff are trained in the most current and cutting-edge techniques, better enabling us to serve our students and their families.

We have an exciting line-up of professional development conferences scheduled for the remainder of this year and even into 2006. Jane Styer-Acevedo, PT, will be presenting two consecutive 2-day courses on November 4-7, 2005. These courses focus on a hands-on approach to treating children with neurological impairments – the first course involves an

introduction to NDT (Neuro-Developmental Treatment) and the second focuses on the treatment of *babies* using an NDT approach.

For more information about P.G. Chambers School's continuing education conferences, please check our website or contact Nancy Altshuler, PT, Conference Coordinator at [AltshulerN@ChambersSchool.org](mailto:AltshulerN@ChambersSchool.org).

### 2005 Fall Conferences

**November 4-5, 2005: Intro to NDT.** Presented by Jane Syer-Acevedo, PT. Sponsored by P.G. Chambers School. Contact Nancy Altshuler at 973-829-8484.

**November 6-7, 2005: Baby Treatment using NDT Facilitation and Theory.** Presented by P.G. Chambers School. Contact Nancy Altshuler at 973-829-8484.

**December 2-3, 2005: Language Processing Disorders/Autism.** Presented by Gail Richard. Contact Educational Resources at 1-800-487-6530.

# Engineering the Classroom

## Technology and visual aides play essential role in therapy

By Kate Matula, SLP and Kelly Bretz, M.S., CCC/SLP

The Communication Department was proud to welcome Carol Goosens' who presented a two-day workshop, *Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Strategies: Tools for Success Across Environments*, on Friday, March 18th and Saturday, March 19th. Goosens' is a well known speech-language pathologist who stresses the importance of selecting and using technology that can easily be used in a variety of settings including home, therapies, and school. She terms this approach the "Engineering Approach," which places heavy emphasis on visual aides that are essential for language comprehension and expression.

The "Engineering Approach" supports a 'push in' model of language intervention, where therapy is done in the classroom. Additionally, this approach encourages a team approach, working with themes, allowing the children to experience concepts frequently, and in a variety of formats and situations.

Goosens' approach uses Aided Language Stimulation, a technique in which the teacher or therapist touches picture symbols along with the ongoing verbal language stimulation to encourage development of language expression and comprehension. The pictures are used to comment on the lesson, highlight new vocabulary, provide directions during the lesson, and questions to probe a child's comprehension of the lesson. Goosens' stresses the need to expose children to different kinds of words including nouns, actions, people, places and location. Children are encouraged to use their own pictures, signs, vocalizations, and devices during these teaching sessions as well.

Goosens' "Engineering Approach" reflects the classroom-centered, interdisciplinary philosophy used at P.G. Chambers School. Teachers and therapists often meet to discuss how they can reinforce the lessons learned in the classroom throughout the child's day—focusing on new vocabulary and ensuring that students have a way to express themselves every minute of the day. The same picture symbols used in the Goosens' approach are used in many different ways during the student's school day.

For more information about Goosens' "Engineering Approach," check out the following books: *Engineering the Preschool Environment for Interactive Symbolic Communication* by Goosens', Crain and Elder and *Engineering Training Environments for Interactive Augmentative Communication* by Elder and Goosens'.



Carol Goosens' and Arlene Sklow, M.A., CCC/SLP, Assistive Communications and Technology Coordinator at P.G. Chambers School discuss ways to implement Goosens' Engineering Approach.

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## Inclusion – Making It Work: Services for Schools and Child Care Programs

In addition to our core programs, P.G. Chambers School helps children, for whom "inclusion" is an option, successfully mainstream into their local school and community. The program equips teachers, program staff and families with the skills and support they need to make inclusion work. Some of our most widely requested programs include classroom adaptation, curriculum modification, therapy and evaluations, behavior management plans, sensory programs, augmentative and assistive technology, and teacher training. If you would like more information about the program, please contact Susan Seamans, Executive Director, at 973-829-8484.

# Young Toddlers-At-Play

## A Sensory-Motor Playgroup

By Joyce Kwasney, MA, Autism Program Coordinator

Johnny hates when his hands get sticky or dirty. He gets very upset if his mother doesn't clean them up right away. Maria is very sensitive to noise. If anyone even laughs loudly, she will cover her ears and cry. Bobby insists on wearing long sleeved shirts well into the warmer weather. He will not wear any shirt until the tag is removed because it irritates him. Michael's parents say that the only time he is not moving is when he is sleeping. He spends the day running, jumping and climbing and never reacts when he falls or bumps into something.

**W**hat do these children have in common? For these children, organizing and adjusting their behaviors in response to different sensory inputs is an overwhelming experience. They may have a difficult time making sense out of the information coming in through their senses. Some may be overly sensitive and may react to even the slightest touch or sound. Those whose sensory systems are less reactive may seek more input by



Rylee, Benjamin and Michael learn to play together at Toddlers-At-Play.

falling, crashing/bumping into things or excessively jumping. For children with over or under reactive sensory systems, the world can be a scary and challenging place.

P.G. Chambers School offers a unique program for children 18 to 36 months of age who experience sensory processing difficulties. **Young Toddlers-At-Play** is a sensory-motor play group that encourages sensory exploration and interaction with peers. Under the supervision of Occupational Therapists (OTs) and a special education teacher, the children play in a sensory-rich environment with lots of swinging, jumping and spinning. Activities such as playing in the ball pit, drawing in shaving cream or squeezing play-doh are incorporated to provide opportunities for sensory input. "This group is not only beneficial for improving a child's sensory needs but it also facilitates social interactions between peers," notes Amy Krynicki, OT at the P.G. Chambers School.

To find out more about the **Toddlers-At-Play** group, contact Joyce Kwasney, [KwasneyJ@ChambersSchool.org](mailto:KwasneyJ@ChambersSchool.org).

## Sensory Processing Resources

### Books:

*The Out of Sync Child and The Out of Sync Child Has Fun* by Carol Kranowitz, MA

### Websites:

The Out-Of-Sync-Child – [www.out-of-sync-child.com](http://www.out-of-sync-child.com)

The SPD Network: Resources for the Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) – [www.sinetwork.org](http://www.sinetwork.org)

## Second Annual Concert in the Park

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be a valuable adjunct to the more traditional approaches.

Our new **Hear My Voice Art and Music Therapy Program**, which incorporates skills from all areas of development, has proven to be effective in not only improving cognitive abilities, expressive and receptive language, motor skills, and social development, but also enhancing self esteem, and motivating and inspiring the children. For many children, the "Arts" provide an outlet for making a connection where other traditional programs fail. Our most recent area of focus involved storytelling and the magic that stories possess to link people, spark the imagination, and open channels of communication and interaction.

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## BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

The *Birthday Book Club* invites families and friends to honor their child's birthday or other special occasion by purchasing a book for the P.G. Chambers School's Library/Resource Room. The child's name is permanently inscribed on each book that is donated. A special thank you to parents who have supported the *Birthday Book Club*. For more information about *Birthday Book Club*, please contact Jilby Mullen at P.G. Chambers School.

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- Kemper Clay Devil Table Top Potters Wheel - \$369 through Dick Blick
- Know the Artist Print Sets: I, III, IV or VII - \$49 through Crystal Productions
- Interdisciplinary Connections: Art & Music prints, The artist as Storyteller prints - \$44 through Crystal Productions
- World Fold Art: A Multicultural Approach, Poster collection - \$29.95 through Crystal Productions
- Monetary Contributions in support of the *Hear My Voice* Program
- 1 Williams Professional Digital Piano - approx. \$2,500
- 1 adjustable piano bench - \$350
- 1 set tempo blocks w/stand - \$200
- 1 Big Foot Keyboard - \$300
- 1 dynamic microphone w/ cable - \$30
- 1 Hanging Cymbal - \$70
- 1 Paddle Drum Clip - \$70

*If you find it more convenient, we would be happy to use your contribution to directly purchase a Wish List item in your name.*

# Connection

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