



Pathways for Families

A newsletter for families with children at The Groden Center, Inc.

Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for persons with autism and other emotional and behavioral disabilities.



Steven and Jonathan watch the computer monitor as trainer Rick Smith leads them through the troubleshooting process.



Adam S. sits proudly at the computer after completing his work.

The Beat Goes on at Groden Center South

On a recent day at the new Groden Center South center in Coventry, Jon and Steven are receiving training from Business and Technical Specialist Rick Smith on how to diagnose and repair computer problems. Rick explains that a customer has forgotten her password, and now has no access to her computer. Jon asks what the words on the monitor mean. Rick explains that the disc is communicating with the hard drive. "How come?" Jon wants to know. Steven asks about the overall goal of their work. Rick explains that they are trying to reload a new operating system, adding "You need to be patient with fixing computers." Rick asks Steven to hit a certain key a few times. This does not have the intended result, yet Steven stays calm, relaxed, and attentive. Both students are eager to learn more.

The computer workshop is an entire classroom, spacious and quiet, making it easy for students to focus on the task at hand without distraction. Jon speaks about the lesson later: "Me and Steven G. were trying to reboot the computer with a disc.

The disc is saying to the hard drive 'This is what you have to say to reboot.'" He has gained a good beginning understanding of the issue.

In the 4A classroom, Johnny is finishing up some data entry on the computer. "Everyone likes the new school," he says. "I come every day. I like doing some academics, I like doing the voc [vocational work] with Steven in the voc room." Steven Hunt, the Trades Manager at Groden's adult vocational program, COVE, now also teaches at Groden Center South. Johnny has also worked in the carpentry workshop. "I do the hammer and the drill", he reports. Johnny lives in the East Bay, and acknowledges that the commute is long. "I mind it sometimes", but he states that the trip is worth it because of the advantages of the setting at Groden South. He sees the vocational and academic work as positives, and is excited about the fact that there might be an art program there eventually.

Doug is on a break after completing some academic programs. How does he like the

new setting, he is asked. "It's pretty cool", he responds enthusiastically, "I like the new school better. They have magazines and books." Doug has a variety of magazines spread out on the table in front of him. At Groden South, there is plenty of room for students to work, as well as spend their breaks, in a comfortable setting where each person has enough room.

Nathan shows this reporter some beans growing in cups on the windowsill. He explains that he enjoyed doing this science activity with Special Education Coordinator Nicole Perry. He inspects the plants carefully, seeing if they need water, and states that the plants need sunlight as well. Nathan is happy in the new environment. He likes the "new classrooms, voc activities, and reading" available at the site.

Students and staff eat lunch in the cafeteria. Preston talks about his morning at a local business, Coventry Lumber. This is his second time there. "It's awesome!" he states, adding "It's fun." Staff person Bob

(continued on page 2)



Doug looks at a magazine during his break.

The Beat Goes on at Groden Center South (continued)

Arruda accompanies Preston to the job site and is impressed with the setting and with Preston's work. "Neatness is important there", he reports, "and Preston is a good worker."

Jon is also eager to share his excitement about the setting. He especially likes "the building in general, how it's constructed". Nick J. nods in agreement. Jon has written his own essay about the site. It begins "The Groden Center South in Coventry...is the size of a football field...the gym room has a lunch room, kitchen room all in one and a stage...there is a teacher's lounge for teachers and staff...there is a secretary named Muriel...and it has a printing and fax machine in one...there is one nurse... named Donna...she has one bathroom to herself...Nicole the speech teacher ...has... one bathroom to herself too! ...The janitors have one janitors' room for themselves and so that way they have supplies." He continues, "The rugs are very nice too in

the Groden Center South in Coventry and the building on the outside is very nice as well as the inside too."

There are currently three classes of older students at the site and two vocational classrooms. Students have been gradually transitioning to the site since December, enjoying and benefiting from the onsite and off site vocational opportunities, and continuing with academic, communication, and social skills instruction. A fourth instructional classroom will be ready in June, and two more are planned for the fall for younger students. When in full operation, there will be seven instructional/academic classrooms and two vocational rooms. "My goal is to have approximately 55-60 students at Groden Center South and the same number at Groden Center Providence" (the Mt. Hope Avenue site), said Program Director Richard Spratt. Reducing the population in Providence will mean more room and better use of space for these students as well.

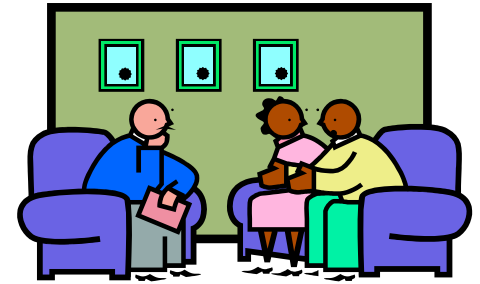


Blooming at the Rhode Island Flower Show

There is nothing so enchanting as the Rhode Island Spring Flower and Garden Show to relieve the February doldrums. For the second year, The Groden Center was a visible presence there. Held at the Rhode Island Convention Center from February 21-24, the flower show attracted thousands of visitors. Many of them stopped at Groden's table which featured jewelry, photography, pottery and other artwork made by children and adults in Groden Network programs. Although items were not for sale at the flower show, many people made arrangements to make purchases later on. Many visitors learned for the first time about the Groden Greenhouse and the Art Center and were quite impressed. Be sure to catch the show next year!

Recognition for Good Work

A letter of appreciation recently came the way of Associate Vocational Director Avis Goldenberg. The Meals on Wheels organization, for whom several Groden classrooms volunteer, wrote a letter of recommendation. "It is with pride and gratitude that Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc, is providing this letter of recommendation on behalf of The Groden Center", wrote Diane Brissette, the director of their Home Delivered Department. She went on to say that Groden students and staff "are punctual, and dedicated to the mission of our agency. The Groden Center delivers meals four times a week...since September of 1997. The staff and students provide an outstanding service and they do so without expecting anything in return. The clients are very appreciative and enjoy the visits as they may be the only face they see on any given day." Kudos to Classrooms 3A, 3B, and 3C, and in the past classrooms 4A and 4B, for a job well done!



NAA Program Provides Relief for Parents

You are not alone if life stressors, including having a child with a developmental disability, is tough on your marriage. The National Autism Association (NAA) hopes to help address this issue by providing grants for couples interested in getting counseling to help deal with the stress of raising a child with autism. Grants of up to \$1000 per family are available through their Family First program, which can be accessed through the NAA website. NAA Board member and parent Lori McIlwain explains the importance of this program: "For many, this could mean providing a stronger foundation for their children to progress, the added security of two incomes, and less stress on each parent."

See www.nationalautismassociation.org/familyfirst.php for more information



Spring Carnival

It might not have felt like spring outside, but that didn't seem to bother over 100 Groden students, their families, and staff who enjoyed the annual Spring Carnival at the Groden Center on Saturday, April 5. The gymnasium was brightly decorated, and each classroom sponsored a booth with a game or craft. The Maintenance Department and Early Intervention Program offered activities as well.

Children received cards when they entered, and received checkmarks for completing each activity. Later on, each child received

a prize in exchange for a completed card. Pizza, popcorn, and dessert made the day complete.

"Spring Carnival is a wonderful opportunity for families of our students to attend an activity together without having to worry about safety or behavior issues", said Robin Ringer, the Director of Family Services. "It's a welcoming environment, and it also shows siblings that this school is a fun, good place for their brother or sister to be, and they look forward to returning for other events."

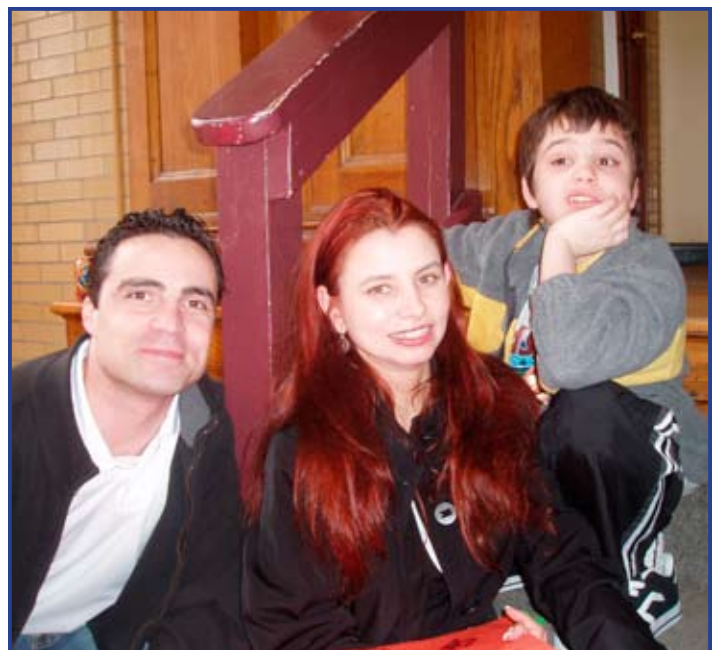
Photo captions:

Top left: Caleb cuddles with his mom, Elizabeth, after a busy afternoon.

Top right: Taylor (right) works on an art project with his brother Zachary, and mom, Kristen.

Bottom left: Stephen and his family enjoy their first Groden Center Spring Carnival.

Bottom right: Travis surveys the festivities with his parents, Lisa and Louis.





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Pathways for Families is published three times each year by The Groden Center Family Services Department.

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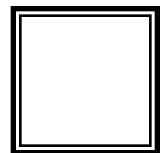
Richard Spratt

Pathways for Families

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Mark Your Calendars

Wednesday, June 18

Staff Appreciation Luncheon Contact Lisa Rego at x1111 if you would like to help out.

Thursday, June 26

Graduation, Field Day and Barbecue An annual favorite! All families welcome.