

John Paul II Center for Special Learning
1092 Welsh Road
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US Postage Paid
Reading, PA
Permit No. 716

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Email Request

We at John Paul II Center would like to keep you informed of the special happenings here at our school. To help us with this endeavor, we are requesting your email address. We respect your privacy and will only contact you with information that may interest you. To submit your e-mail address, please contact us at 610-777-0605 or visit us online at www.JohnPaulIICenter.org.



Official Publication of
John Paul II Center for Special Learning
www.JohnPaulIICenter.org

This newsletter is published for friends of John Paul II Center. If you have any questions regarding any of the information in this publication, please contact Camille Stock, Director of Advancement, at 610-777-0605 or cstock@johnpauliicenter.org via email.

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John Paul II Center
for special learning

Diocese of Allentown

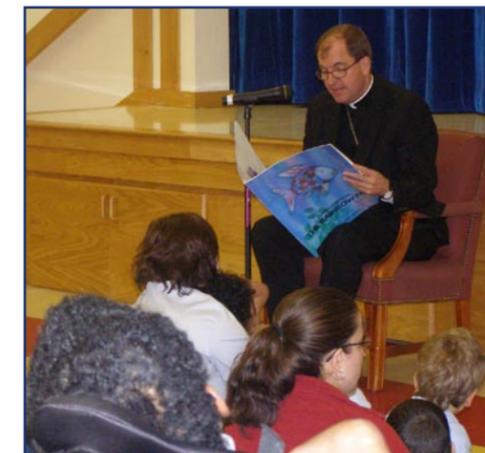
Guiding Hands to the Future

Summer 2010

Celebrity Reading Event is one for the books

March 15th to 19th marked our first Celebrity Reading Event which celebrated and brought awareness to March as National Mental Retardation Awareness Month. Our event was kicked off by The Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Allentown, who read *The Rainbow Fish*. A reception followed which gave Bishop Barres an opportunity to meet with our students, families, and friends of the school.

The event continued throughout the week with Chris Heslop, jazz musician, music educator and recipient of the 2010 Frank Scott Award who read *Nicky, the Jazz Cat*, a visit from The Reading Phillies mascot Screwball and Reading Phillies Education Coordinator Todd Hunsicker, who read and acted out *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, Dave Kline, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Reading Eagle Company & WEEU Radio who read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, and concluded with Melissa Fullerton, Reporter, 69-News Berks Edition who read *The Giving Tree* and *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.



The Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Allentown, reads The Rainbow Fish to students at John Paul II Center.



Reading Phillies Education Coordinator, Todd Hunsicker, reads We're Going on a Bear Hunt to students while Reading Phillies mascot Screwball acts out the story.

John Paul II Legacy Gala to be held March 2011

Our first Legacy Gala will recognize someone in our community who embodies the mission of John Paul II Center for Special Learning. This year we will recognize Peggy and Jack Horrigan for their continued and tireless dedication to our school and students.

The event will be held on **Saturday, March 19, 2011** at 6:00 p.m. at Stokesay Castle in Reading (*please note the date change*). We hope you can attend and share in a very special evening with Peggy and Jack, their family and friends, and our students and staff.

If you are interested in sponsoring the event, or if you would like to receive an invitation to the Legacy Gala, please contact our Advancement Office at 610-777-0605, or by e-mail: info@johnpauliicenter.org. More information about the event can be found on our website: www.johnpauliicenter.org. Proceeds from the event will support the mission of John Paul II Center.

Our Mission

To provide a quality individualized academic, social and religious program for children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities or related special education needs in a safe, nurturing, Christian environment that acknowledges the dignity of all learners while challenging them on a daily basis to develop their talents and reach their God-given potential.

From our principal . . .

Dear Friends,

In a blink of an eye another school year has come and gone. There is hardly enough time to stop and reflect. This past year had many challenges, rewards, celebrations and many sorrows. Unfortunately the most prevalent were the sorrows. We lost three of God's most special children. They were called home to be with the Lord. They enriched our lives and we're grateful for the opportunity to have them as part of our school family.

Many of the challenges we faced were the ever increasing costs to run and maintain the school and expanding our financial support to meet those costs. Even with the economy in turmoil we continued to receive support from loyal donors and even a few new ones for our wonderful mission. I'm sure you're bombarded on a daily basis from various non-profits to support them. I thank you for choosing us. I can confidently tell you every penny is put towards providing the best possible program for our students to thrive.

Our celebrations are always an opportunity to proclaim the good work we do here and praise the students for their many achievements. We had three students receive confirmation in the fall. We welcomed our new Bishop (as a celebrity reader) with an opportunity to read to our students. We dedicated a new playground. A seminarian that was placed with us as his pastoral service seven years ago came back as a newly ordained priest to celebrate Mass. We opened our doors to many of our friends to spend some time with us to observe the great program we provide here. Everyone is always in amazement of all that is accomplished on a daily basis.

The best rewards are always the achievements our students make daily. Whether they learn to spell their first name, put their own shoes on, or order their own lunch we applaud them. No achievement is too small to be recognized and rewarded. Never take for granted the small tasks you do on a daily basis, we celebrate them.

As I reflect on the year and plan for a new one, I always strive to plan more, do more, and accomplish more. I expect this of my staff and students and can only expect the same for me. Please continue to pray for us and support us as we carry out God's plan. Know that we always keep you in our thoughts and prayers as you continue on your path.

Yours in Christ,
Mary Adams

Carena Burkholder,
Katie White,
Thomas Gallante
and Omar
Oquendo greet
Mondrian and
author Janet York.



Students enjoy Spring Dance

Volunteers from Alvernia University's Education Association decorated, set up and served dinner, and acted as chaperones for our annual Spring Dance, held on May 7th. This year's theme was "Candyland." Students ages 14 and older, alumni, and New Horizons consumers may attend this event which everyone looks forward to each year. Many thanks to our friends at Alvernia University.



Jameson Parisi and Jenna Rentschler dance the night away at the Spring Dance.

In Memoriam

Andrea Corradini, age 60, passed away on January 21, 2010. Andrea was a consumer in New Horizons since 2007, and resided at Day Spring Homes.

Regina Murray, age 52, passed away on April 11, 2010, and was a consumer in New Horizons since 2007.

Jose' Oben, age 6, passed away on April 24, 2010. Jose' was a student in the Primary class since August 2009.

Our condolences and prayers are with their families.

"Dog Day" at John Paul II Center

Janet York, author of children's books, sculptor, dog breeder, handler and trainer, visited John Paul II Center for Special Learning on Wednesday, May 26th to read excerpts from her book, *Mondo Man: Smartest Dog In All the Land*. Janet brought her Cavalier King Charles spaniel therapy dogs, Mondrian and Tuxedo; Mondrian provided entertainment and therapy for the students and New Horizons participants, who greeted, played with and petted Mondrian. *Mondo Man* is the story of a heroic dog, Mondrian, who saves the life of Mya, a child with selective mutism. The book is one of a series of adventures of Janet's Cavalier King Charles spaniels, including: Frederik goes to Hollywood, Corneel at The Plaza, and Corneel the Cavalier.

Local photographer, Jan Stitzel of The Winning Image in Bernville, provided the photography for the book. Mya Blessing Stitzel, Jan's daughter, portrays the child with a disability injured in a storm and rescued by Mondo the dog. Jan and Mya are the daughter and granddaughter of Karen Lempengel, Director of New Horizons.

John Paul II Center Program Spotlight: Sandi Lloyd Occupational Therapy

Making pretzels from scratch was fun for the students at John Paul II Center – they mixed the dough, rolled out the dough, sprayed the pretzels with butter, and sprinkled the pretzels with salt. After the students baked the pretzels it was time to enjoy the delicious treat they had created. What the students did not know during the process was that they were also learning and developing many skills as part of the Occupational Therapy program led by therapist Sandi Lloyd. She has brought her gift of working with students with special needs to John Paul II Center and has developed a program that is creative, recognizes that each student has special gifts, and brings joy to our students. Sandi



Lloyd, Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant, has worked with the students at John Paul II Center for three years, after working in two local public school

districts for six years. Sandi works with students two mornings each week to enhance and develop underlying skills to perform everyday tasks, many tasks those without special needs take for granted in being able to perform. Her goal, and the goal of occupational therapy is to improve the ability of people to perform tasks in daily activities and in an occupational/work environment – a student's "occupation" is being a student. John Paul II Center students work with Sandi to address functional skills such as handwriting, scissor cutting, coloring, computer keyboarding, self care (personal hygiene such as brushing teeth, buttoning, tying, zipping), organizing, attention/listening skills, and movement (using playground equipment, participating in group activities). Sandi collaborates with the teachers and staff to create and meet the individual goals of each student, and she observes, assesses and implements strategies for developmental tasks such as gross, fine, and visual motor skills, visual perception, and sensory and social/emotional skills. Occupational therapy uses a multi-sensory approach while teaching skills, so, for example, when teaching the color green, Sandi would have the students snap green beans and eat and feel green Jello.

What brought Sandi to John Paul II Center and to the field of occupational therapy was her belief that each human has special gifts and talents, and she wanted to help people reach their potential with these gifts. Sandi's mother worked in the special

education field, and Sandi enjoyed what she saw her mother doing (Sandi's daughter is also an occupational therapist). After obtaining her associate degree in Applied Science from Penn State – Berks,

Sandi served as an aide to a child with special needs, confirming her decision to become an occupational therapist. Sandi and her husband Matt have four children, and are very involved with the St. Catherine of Sienna Church and faith community. In her spare time, Sandi enjoys reading, crafting, playing tennis, and spending time outdoors.

Sandi's every day successes include implementing the "Handwriting without Tears" ® program used in the Intermediate classroom, teaching students in the primary class to walk in straight lines in the hallway, sitting still and waiting their turns, working with the older students in the Secondary class to engage in teamwork, finish tasks, enhance their socialization skills, and improve their self esteem, and in the multi-disabilities class fine and gross motor skills including scissor cutting. Bringing Christ into group therapy is also important to Sandi – she created the pretzel making therapy as a Lenten lesson in prayer- and she requires that her students show respect, courtesy, and kindness at all times.

Although various occupational therapy activities and lessons may seem like "play" (like potting plants for students to give as Mother's Day presents, crawling through tunnels, using a hula hoop), students are actually learning life skills that will prepare them for living a life as independent as possible once they graduate. Donations to our school help support the Occupational Therapy program – the generosity of our donors is what makes many of our programs possible. Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Creative Drama and Art Therapy require sustained support from donors in order to continue to be offered and enhanced to allow each student to make strides in developing and maintaining many life skills.



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and The Diocese of Allentown – join us
on Facebook!

Drama & Art Show brings smiles to families and friends

Students at John Paul II Center love to be on stage, and they showed off their creative talents at this year's Drama & Art Show held on June 7th. Lead by Joel Gori and Janet Rowley, faculty members of the Yocum Institute for Arts Education, Wyomissing, students performed

improvisational skits based on the story of Jack & The Beanstalk. The audience of parents and friends laughed and applauded during the outstanding theatrical performances put on by the students.

Mr. Gori teaches Creative Drama to our students every Monday during the school year. The students enjoy the creative drama because

it is spontaneous fun which Mr. Gori creates as the class progresses through each skit. Creative drama helps to improve speech and language skills, creativity and imagination, gross motor skills, spatial awareness and relations and the ability to follow directions. Our students also "come out of their shell" during creative drama – some students who are normally shy and reserved find this to be a very non-threatening opportunity to be creative and be fun.

The walls of the auditorium were decorated with the outstanding artwork created during the school year. Ms. Nicole Romanski, also with the Yocum Institute works with JP II students every



Jennifer Valdez-Urbina, Grant Grauf and Jenna Rentschler improvise on stage with Joel Gori.

Thursday providing Art Therapy. The medium she uses for the artwork is as creative as the final pieces. Students created a collaborative, mixed medium "Spring Garden" mural for the Art Show featuring clouds, sun and flowers using tempera paints, oil pastels, and pulled cotton. Each class contributed to the mural, and worked on various components of the landscape – "research" included reading *Clouds* by Eric Carle, and viewing silk flowers. Art therapy teaches our students about different art mediums, and helps develop fine motor skills, works with students with sensory issues, and requires that a student stays on task and follows directions. It is a method for students to be creative and have positive self expression, and is a confidence builder because it is a very accepting therapy practice.

We are very thankful to Yocum Institute for Arts Education for providing the Creative Drama and Art Therapy classes for our students. It is one of several programs we provide here at JP II that makes our school more unique and encourages learning using a different teaching method.



Nicole Romanski works with student Hunter Heckman.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week took place during the week of January 31-February 6. Our theme this year was Dividends for Life, and we celebrated through a variety of classroom and school wide activities including a "Jeopardy" competition, the celebration of mass, a Volunteer Luncheon, a visit by a ventriloquist, and daily dress up/dress down days.

Guiding Hands Annual Fund

The Guiding Hands Campaign is now "The Guiding Hands Annual Fund." Opportunities to give to our annual fund take place during our fiscal year, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. Solicitations for the Guiding Hands Fund are made by direct mail which will be mailed Fall 2010. Donations received from our annual fund are unrestricted funds, and will be used for current operations and to support the mission of the John Paul II Center. We will acknowledge all donations in our Annual Report of Gifts. Your gifts this past year helped to provide a quality individualized academic, social and religious education at John Paul II Center where we educate "the whole child."



Thomas Gallante and Trent Eidel, Primary Class students



Eagle's fans Hunter Heckman, Mrs. Shelly Kreska and Charity Oswald

JP II Students make Easter eggs and new friends

Sixth grade students from LaSalle Academy in Shillington teamed up with John Paul II students on February 19th to

decorate Easter eggs using the Pysanky process, a Ukrainian egg decorating tradition. Pysanky involves using a stylus with melted beeswax – intricate designs are drawn onto the egg, the egg is dipped in different colored dyes, and finally, the beeswax is melted off.

Diane Rollins started this wonderful event three years ago when demonstrating Pysanky to John Paul II students. This year Diane and JP II teacher Shelly



Gina Ciabattoni works with a stylus.

Kreska added the special touch of having students from LaSalle Academy come to John Paul II Center to help our students with the egg decorating. Students from both schools benefitted from the workshop – all the students made a new friend, and got to decorate a beautiful egg to take home as a keepsake.



Jenna Rentschler puts the finishing touches on her egg.

Cub Pack 222 holds annual Pinewood Derby

This year's annual Pinewood Derby was held on April 27th. The cub scouts worked on their cars since January, including carving, sanding, painting and assembling the pinewood cars, and attaching the adequate amount of weights to enhance the ability of the cars to race.

Cub Pack 222 meets the first and third Monday of the month during the

school year from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. It was chartered to John Paul II Center in 2005. Scouts complete badge work during the meetings, including learning about gemology, camping, engineering and citizenship. The Cubmaster is Jim Kaucher, and he is assisted by Shelly Kreska, George Shiels, and Elaine Strick.



Jamal Rios and Oliver Reber paint their Derby cars.

Fun and Field Day 2010

Each May, students from Holy Name High School host students from John Paul II Center at the HNHS stadium and track. Students from JP II get a HNHS buddy when they arrive, and the pair spend the day together participating in the fun and athletic events, including soccer kick, shot put, long jump, parachute play, face painting, and finger painting.



Jon Angstadt, Holy Name High School and Patrick McCullough, John Paul II Center "competing" at the long jump event while students cheer them on.

Donations honoring a loved one

Donations to John Paul II Center for Special Learning can be made "In Memory Of" a loved one, or "In Honor Of" someone special. If you wish to make such a donation, we will send acknowledgement to both the donor, and to the family of the deceased, or to the honoree (provided you send us the information) to let them know a special gift was made in their name to our school.

Special Olympians!

The JP II Secondary Class shows off their ribbons won at this year's Special Olympics held at Kutztown University on April 28th. Some of our students qualified for state competition which was held in early June at Penn State University.

