

# PRISM

**BC**  
**CS** Brookville Center  
for Children's Services

SUMMER 2015 | Volume 5 Issue 1



**"Any chance for these preschoolers to see and model the behavior of their peers, it only reinforces and encourages what we're teaching."**

*Denise Gaughan*



*Students place their "ID badges" outside a classroom before entering.*

*A student takes a break from playing with blocks to smile for the camera.*

## PRESCHOOLERS GET SOCIAL

**In a world so big, a preschooler can feel so small, but at the Education Center, preschoolers get a chance to feel bigger.**

Preschoolers at the Education Center are socializing with other classes through a fun activity called preschool exchange. Every week, the world expands for these little preschoolers. Preparing to visit neighboring classrooms, students begin to line up; anxiously clinging to their "ID badges," indicating their classroom and name.

Before a teacher can finish saying start, students are bursting into their classroom of choice. As each student goes into a room, they have to place their badge outside the door. Each classroom focuses on a different activity every week, and with games like Just Dance and building blocks, there's plenty of activity to keep it bustling.

"Our preschool exchange gives all of the students a chance to socialize with one another," said program supervisor Denise Gaughan.

More importantly, it increases the amount of integration within the program. "Integration is such a big part of not only Brookville Center but the future of services," noted Gaughan.

With two integrated classrooms and three self-contained, preschool exchange allows students with developmental and intellectual disabilities

to see the appropriate and typical behavior from their peers, reinforcing and encouraging what the school implements with early intervention services.

As Gaughan said, "Any chance for these preschoolers to see and model the behavior of their peers, it only reinforces and encourages what we're teaching."

The preschool exchange also works to enhance independence among students. By going from classroom to classroom and partaking in various activities, preschoolers are taught an independence that isn't facilitated by their teachers. Rather than having a regimented schedule and students following a controlled activity, they're given ownership of that time. "Our students are being encouraged to explore their interests and to make their own decisions," said Gaughan.

Implementing a creative program such as preschool exchange to encourage independence and reinforce behaviors is a primary reason as to why 63% of kids in the Education Center with intellectual and developmental disabilities are set to head back to their district program following their graduation this month. With a total of 33 graduates (not including daycare), 25 will be attending kindergarten in district placements. Two graduates will be going to other private or Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) placements, two will be staying with BCCS and

three are still awaiting their meetings.

"It's a great thing when our preschoolers are supported to reach their full potential," said Gaughan. "It's a testament to our mission at Brookville Center and the work that the teachers and other staff are doing here."



*Two students socialize with one another.*

Brookville Center for Children's Services is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization serving over 1,000 children with and without developmental disabilities from Nassau, Queens and Suffolk Counties. Brookville Center for Children's Services is affiliated with AHRC Nassau and the North Shore-LIJ Health System.

516-686-4496

[www.brookvillecenter.org](http://www.brookvillecenter.org)





Pearl Star Sponsors Robyn Semilof (far left) alongside Suzanne Reek (second from left) and Kathy Harvey (second from right) of Nassau Suffolk Autism Society of America with program supervisor Sherry Black (far right).

## ANOTHER RECORD BREAKING YEAR FOR AUTISM DINNER

The stars aligned for a perfect evening as parents, teachers, and supporters of Brookville Center for Children's Services autism program gathered for a night of giving and commitment to enriching the lives of children with autism.

This year's event honored Rock Out Autism, a non-profit dedicated to improving the quality of life and maximizing individual potential for people of all ages affected by autism spectrum disorders through their benefit concert. For the past six years, Rock Out Autism has held an annual concert, resulting in a donation of over \$50,000 to Brookville Center's autism program.



Opal and Diamond Star Sponsor Lisa & Carlos Orellana.

Reach for the Stars successfully raised over \$150,000 thanks to sponsors and supporters. Fundraising dollars from the event are critical in maintaining and supporting the autism program.

Special thanks to the generous event sponsors including Opal Sponsor: Family and Friends of Gabriel Orellana; Ruby Star Sponsor: K.C. Gallagher's, Sea Cliff and The Edward Smith Mineola Lions Club; Sapphire Star Sponsors: The Dirks Family, Dr. Lisa Liberatore & Dr. Dimitri Kessarlis, Donna & Anthony Pistilli and Sparkling Pointe Winery; Pearl Star Sponsors: The Family of Damian Battista, Alisa & Lloyd Groveman, Nassau/Suffolk Autism Society of America, St. John's University, Barbara & Robert Lucey, Robyn and Brandon Semilof; Amethyst Star Sponsor: The Kate Tschernoletzt Foundation; Diamond Star Sponsor Lisa and Carlos Orellana, and Gold Star Sponsor: Mrs. Burnette S. Groveman.



Joe Bosnack presents honorees Nick Tangorra (left) and brother Rafe (middle) of Rock Out Autism with the Shining Star award.

Co-founder Rafe Tangorra and brother Nick accepted the award on behalf of Rock Out Autism.

## BCCS RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Upon review, Brookville Center for Children's Services has been named a 2015-2016 School of Excellence by the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET).

Brookville Center joins only small number of qualified licensed private special education schools to have this honor in the State of New York.

"Recognition as one of the best private schools in New York State is a reflection of the high standards Marianne Klotz and her team personify each and every day," stated Associate Executive Director Stanford Perry.

"It is our students and families who are the true beneficiaries of this honor."

Selection as a NASET School of Excellence is the highest level of recognition a private special education school can achieve through their professional association. This honor is presented to private special education schools that meet rigorous professional criteria and have demonstrated truly exceptional dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of special education.



## GETTING YOUNG GARDENERS GROWING

Get the seeds and soil out, students are tapping into their green thumbs!

Brookville Center was recently awarded the 2015 Jamba Juice "It's All about the Fruit and Veggies" Garden Grant.



The grant, awarded to 30 youth programs, provides the program with gardening tools, a cedar raised bed and composter, a check for plants and soil, a generous seed donation and even a nutrition book.

The grant allows Brookville Center to expand its current gardening program and make it more ongoing. The garden at Brookville Center is a multi-sensory environment that provides stimulation for all of the human sensory systems.

School gardening engages students by providing a dynamic environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. School gardens provide hands-on learning where interdisciplinary lessons are drawn from real life experiences, encouraging students to become active participants in their learning.



Introducing kids to gardening helps them to experience and appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature. Gardening together helps kids learn to work and problem solve cooperatively and creatively. Expanding the garden at Brookville Center will further connect students with the outdoors, promote healthier eating habits, provide vocational learning activities and connect students with the larger community among other things. In the past, students have donated food grown in the garden to a local soup kitchen.

From a kid's point of view, it's loads of fun; after all, what kid wouldn't turn down a chance to get messy with dirt, water and plants?



### "HEROES" SEGMENT PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON BCCS

Brookville Center's autism program was featured in a segment on Verizon FiOs' "Heroes on Our Island." The segment appeared on April 14th, fittingly during autism awareness month and focused on how the program and its staff are helping students reach their full potential through life-skills training, music and art therapy and other programming.

Visit the Brookville Center website at <https://www.brookvillecenter.org/> to watch the segment.

**WHEATLEY PLAZA GIVES BACK**

A FOUR DAY SHOPPING BENEFIT IN SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15 THROUGH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18**

**25%** of designated full-price pre-tax purchases will be donated to the following participating organizations of the customer's choice.

Brookville Center for Children's Services Child Abuse Prevention Services Child Life Program at Winthrop University Hospital Children's Medical Fund of New York The Green Vale School 'Kids Connect' KPMG Family for Literacy Larger Than Life Manhasset School Community Association SCA	NSSA - Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism North Shore Autism Circle Portledge School Roslyn Trinity Co-Op Loop Day School Salem Elementary School School for Language and Communication Development Sunrise Day Camp The Viscardi Center Vincent Smith School
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# WHEATLEY PLAZA

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# KEEP UP WITH YOUR LITTLE ONE'S ACTIVITY LEVEL

Check out some of these kid-friendly venues on Long Island this summer that accommodate children with special needs and will make a family outing more manageable.

## Let All the Children Play

At Eisenhower Park in East Meadow is a 2-acre accessible park and playground that's specially designed so that children with disabilities and special needs can play alongside siblings and friends.

The equipment exceeds the guidelines set by the Americans with Disabilities Act and is designed to help children develop gross and fine motor skills and cultivate balance and spatial perception. There are three play areas: one for toddlers, a section for ages 2-5 and another for ages 5-12.

Swings have harnesses, slides have gradual slopes, and the seesaw has a backrest on one side to provide more stability.

The paths are wide enough for a wheelchair, and the surface is springy throughout. Sand and water play areas can be accessed with a wheelchair. The parking and amenities are nearby, and there are benches all around for comfortable supervision.

Let All the Children Play is located at Field 4 in Eisenhower Park on Long Island. For more information, call 516-569-0648 or visit latcp.org.

## Pump It Up

A popular play space filled with giant inflatables, Pump It Up offers monthly Sensory Playtime sessions for kids on the autism spectrum. On select Wednesday nights, bring your child to bounce, jump, slide, and play sensory-friendly games in private arenas.

Pump It Up can also accommodate support groups, play therapy sessions, and social events for individuals on the autism spectrum or those with other special needs, their family members and friends, and the professionals who work with them. Brookville Center programs have frequently visited Pump It Up for field trips.

Pump It Up Great Neck  
225 Community Drive, Suite 250, 516-466-7867  
Pump It Up Plainville  
135 Dupont St, 516-575-2300

## Arts Respite

The Theresa Academy of Performing Arts offers Saturday Respite every week, 9am-12pm. This drop-off event allows kids to get hands-on with art and enjoy dance, yoga, drumming, music, and more, as they socialize with peers. Visit [tapany.org](http://tapany.org) for more information.



## Sensory-Friendly Films/Shows

The Autism Society has partnered with select AMC Theatres throughout the U.S. to present Sensory-Friendly Films.

These special screenings feature family movies in a toned-down version of the movie theater experience—the lights stay up, the sound is turned down, and audience members are encouraged to get up, walk around, and make as much noise as they please.

Find a Long Island theater that hosts these special screenings at [nyspecialparent.com/movies](http://nyspecialparent.com/movies).

## Wheelchair-Accessible Museum

All of the galleries at the Long Island Children's Museum in Garden City are wheelchair-accessible. Galleries include an area devoted to bubbles, a live animal exhibit, the "Sound Showers" exhibit and more. If you want to avoid large crowds as most of us do, avoid the museum on inclement weather days.

## Wheelchair-Accessible Nature Trails



Take a stroll through a nature trail on Long Island that has been approved as wheelchair accessible by the nonprofit Rails-To-Trails Conservancy. Bethpage Bikeway, Jones Beach Bikeway, Cedar Creek Park in Nassau County and Kings Park Hike



& Bike Trail and Old Dock Road to Nissequogue River State Park in Suffolk County are all great trails to explore.

## Surf's Up!

Surfer's Way is a non-profit organization designed to offer children with special needs the opportunity to experience the exhilaration and liberation of surfing. They offer free surf outings during the summer at Riverside Beach in Long Beach. Visit <http://www.surfersway.org/> for more information.



A student enjoying a recent field trip to Pump It Up.

## SUMMER PLANNING: TIPS FOR TRIPS!

Summer trips and adventures are just around the corner and anyone who has organized a trip for their family knows how much time and effort it takes.

If you're the parent of a child with special needs, the effort and time needed only multiplies. While the preparation required for finding accommodations, reaching a destination or simply getting out of the house can be a small miracle, families work around it and enjoy it every day.

Consider some of these tips when prepping outings and vacations this summer-

### RESEARCH AND PREPARE

It's important to have a system, call ahead and expect the unexpected. Whether it be the hotel, a restaurant or a museum, call and express any concerns and learn more about their accommodations. It helps to choose a destination that "gets it." When it comes to having fun, many destinations need to go way beyond the minimum of legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

With food allergies and intolerances on the rise, families often need make special food requests, such as gluten-free or peanut-free dishes. Attempting to coordinate a child's sensory, dietary, and energy needs while traveling can make any vacation or holiday seem like a full-time job.

Whether you'll be staying at a hotel or with family, call ahead to discuss special dietary requirements, sleeping arrangements and any other concerns you may have.

When choosing a hotel, you may want to inquire about any renovations at the facility that could bother a child with noise sensitivity. If your child uses a weighted blanket, you may want to call the hotel to find out if they have a heavy blanket available.

Even if you don't have any immediate plans for a trip, start talking about planes and pointing them out to your kids. Talk about the kind of places or family/friends you can visit by taking a plane. Many kids with autism and other special needs require social stories to help them through new experiences or teach everyday skills. Carol Gray has written two books that may help: *My Social Stories Book* and *The New Social Story Book*.

There's also an app by Avril Webster called *Off We Go: Going on a Plane*. The app is designed to prepare children with special needs for their journey and introduces them to some of the typical sounds that they would hear.



### CHOOSE TRAVEL TIMES WISELY

Consider scheduling your travel around your child's most high energy times. For example, leave later in the morning after he or she has had a healthy dose of exercise or plan your travel time during your child's typical downtime. For a child with a sensory processing disorder, you'll want to schedule your travel times when airports or freeways are least crowded to avoid meltdowns.

### SCHEDULE BASED ON YOUR CHILD'S SPECIFIC STRUGGLES

If your child craves structure and routine, break down the trip into increments your child can understand. For example, if you'll be traveling by plane, make a four step schedule that includes items like 1. Check into airport, 2. Enjoy flight, 3. Pick up luggage, 4. Drive to destination, etc. Let your child mark off each item as you complete it so he or she will know what to expect next.

### ASK FOR HELP

Many people hesitate to ask for help or for special accommodations, but they're put in place to help and make life easier. If a line at the airport is really long, speak to the TSA agent, sometimes they will let you skip ahead. When you get to the boarding area, speak to the flight attendants and request priority boarding. Boarding the plane allows you to take your time and get settled. If you know something specific will help your child or prevent a behavior issue, it's likely that someone can accommodate you.

### DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Stay ahead of sensory meltdowns and discomfort by dressing your child in soft, comfortable clothes when you travel. Bring along sunglasses and ear plugs for those with hypersensitivities. If your child tends to wander, make sure he or she is wearing an ID bracelet or identification sticker that includes medical information and your mobile phone number.

### BRING ACTIVITIES AND SNACKS

Plan ahead so boredom and hunger won't be part of your child's travel experience. While electronic activities can be great, they can also lead to meltdowns if they fail to work properly or if the battery runs low. Bring along some small activities that don't require batteries as a backup. Avoid high sugar snacks and drinks that can cause the inevitable sugar crash. Don't forget to pack any other special items like noise-cancelling headphones or a favorite comfort item, pillow or blanket. It could be the thing that prevents a meltdown.

Parents select destinations after years of trial and error, but for parents who are just beginning to travel with their children or are seeking new adventures, there are numerous destinations that pay special attention to special needs and are worth noting. We hope these travel tips help make your next trip a success!

## TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING

With five locations throughout Nassau County, there's a lot going on! Take a look at some fun happenings around our sites.



Celebrity chef, television host, author, and restaurateur Lidia Bastianich stopped by the autism program as part of her participation in "Bake it Forward." The students enjoyed making an apple and apricot tart with homemade whipped cream!



Barbara C. Wilson's Parent Association arranged for Bob the Builder to visit all the classrooms to coincide with the curriculum on building. The children were entertained by a story and everyone got to take their pictures with Bob.



Students from the Port Washington school district's drama club in partnership with Barbara C. Wilson's Parent Association helped to support the program's Clothing Unit with Pete the Cat. Pete performed one of the children's favorite books, *Rocking in My School Shoes*.



Greek Council student body members collaborated with the program at SUNY Old Westbury during "Greek Week." The students spent time in the preschool classes singing, reading, coloring and just socializing with the children.



Spring came in full swing at Old Westbury as Ms. Grossman's pre-k class learned about the life cycle of a caterpillar to a butterfly, making their very own caterpillar hats and parading around the school, sharing the fun with all their friends.



Students at the Education Center thoroughly enjoyed the Scholastic Bookfair that came by, with students and teachers adding plenty of books to their collection.

## ART EXHIBIT CALLS ON BROOKVILLE ARTISTS

Brookville students were once again asked to participate in a special art exhibit displaying artwork from students across Long Island with autism.

As part of the Kiwanis Club's Autistic Youth Art Exhibit, the Art League of Long Island hosted the exhibition, entitled 'Perspective.' The exhibition ran from May 28th- June 7th, complete with a reception for all for the participating artists.

The art exhibit is a wonderful opportunity to encourage young artists and showcase their talents and Brookville students welcomed the chance to tap into their creativity.



A student shows off his masterpiece.



A student works on his painting alongside his teacher.

## BOTH PARENTS AND STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM STAR PROGRAM

Staff, students, administrators and parents amongst the Marcus Avenue and Barbara C. Wilson sites have fully embraced the STAR (Strategies for Teaching Based on Autism Research) Program.

The STAR Program is an ABA-based instructional program that teaches children with autism using evidence-based practices. The program includes a curriculum-based assessment for teaching in the six curricular areas of receptive language, expressive language, spontaneous language, functional routines, academics, and play & social skills.

STAR provides a comprehensive curriculum-based assessment, documents progress on IEPs and meets the individual needs of students at various developmental levels.

BCCS Marcus Avenue is currently laying the groundwork for the full implementation of STAR in all 6:1:2 and 8:1:2 classrooms this coming fall. Following full-day training in March, Marcus Avenue's BCBA staff is now working with select students to introduce the program and explore what will be needed in terms of training, materials, procedures, and support to ensure the smooth, successful launch in the fall.

Over at Barbara C. Wilson, Project IMPACT (Improving Parents as Communication Teachers), the home/school component of the STAR curriculum, has been incorporated.

Focused on incorporating certain techniques and strategies for parents to use during daily routines and activities to improve children's social communication and play skills, the home/school component provides parents with the skills necessary to interact with their children at their developmental level in addition to providing each child with increased frequency of intervention and increased opportunity to practice and apply skills across environments.

"We introduced this component two years ago and it was received with much enthusiasm," said Assistant Director Diane Condy.

The parent training model consists of one three-hour workshop in addition to six two-hour group sessions and six 45 minute individual hands-on coaching sessions in which the parent works with their child and two trainers.

STAR curriculum combines three aspects of applied behavior analysis: discrete trial teaching (DTT), pivotal response training (PRT), and functional routines instruction (FR). Prewritten lesson plans address each individual student's specific objectives across domains and content areas: expressive language, receptive language, spontaneous language, functional routines, preacademic skills, and play and social interaction concepts.

"We have had an overwhelming response to this year's parent training offering and plan to run more sessions," noted Condy.

## TECHNOLOGY TEACHER UTILIZES STUDENT'S TALENTS



Making a video takes hard work and concentration.

Early on in the school year, technology teacher Ariel Myers decided to create a video yearbook for the students.

After months of taking pictures and capturing video, the students will soon get a DVD keepsake highlighting the school year's fun programs and special activities for the very first time.

While Ariel was hard at work all year, she also recruited some tech-savvy students to help with the video.

"We have some students who really excel in this area," said Myers. Myers typically works with students one at a time twice during the week

and schedules out tasks to have them complete. "Whether it's titling certain slides or trimming video clips down, I provide them with something specific to accomplish," noted Myers.

While many students these days are tech-savvy, video editing is a whole other element. "It's certainly not easy," said Myers.

"It's a big undertaking," said program supervisor Denise Gaughan. "It's coming along great and the children who are involved in the project are not only enhancing their computer skills but they're enjoying the opportunity to work on such a big project."

In addition to a DVD highlighting the entire Education Center, a DVD is being made for each class, showing their specific classroom activities and achievements and shedding more light on each individual.

"To see a long term project grow and come full circle has been really rewarding for these students," said Gaughan.



A student takes a break to pose with technology teacher Ariel Myers.

The information within this publication is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to the Brookville Center for Children Services. This issue features articles relevant to parents, staff, educators, and community members regarding issues facing education today. Prism is published twice a year.

## PRISM

Brookville Center for Children's Services

### JULY 2015

**July 15**  
**Mad Science Air and Bubble Show**  
Barbara C. Wilson

**July 16**  
**Block Party**  
Education Center  
Parking Lot  
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Rain Date  
July 17  
Ed Center &  
Cissy Birnbaum Building

**July 22**  
**Family Support Meeting**  
La Mottas Restaurant  
Port Washington  
11:30 a.m.

**July 23**  
**Carnival**  
Education Center  
Parking Lot  
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Rain Date  
July 24  
Ed Center &  
Cissy Birnbaum Building

**July 28**  
**Tye-Dying day**  
Education Center  
Parking Lot  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Rain Date  
July 29  
Ed Center &  
Cissy Birnbaum  
Building

### AUGUST 2015

**August 6**  
**Field Day**  
Education Center Field  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Rain Date  
August 7  
Education Center Field

**August 13**  
**Art Show**  
Ed Center &  
Cissy Birnbaum  
Gymnasium  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

### SEPTEMBER 2015

**September 9**  
**First Day of School**  
SUNY Old Westbury

### OCTOBER 2015

**October 15-18**  
**Wheatley Plaza Gives Back**

**October 30**  
**Annual Halloween Costume Parade**  
SUNY Old Westbury  
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

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