



Promising Futures

Inside ASAH

SAVE THE DATE:

The **36th Annual ASAH Conference** will be held on November 14-15, 2013, in Atlantic City. Watch our website for more information: www.asah.org.

ASAHA is a not-for-profit association of over 145 approved private schools and agencies in New Jersey serving children with significant complex disabilities. Contact ASAH to learn more about a full range of private school options and services, and about schools near you. Call 877-287-ASAHA (2724). Or visit us online www.asah.org.

Making Friends and Making Music:

Inclusive Opportunities at The Phoenix Center

When Dr. Geraldine Gibbia, Executive Director of The Phoenix Center met with principal of Good Shepherd Academy, a Middle States-accredited program for grades K-8, she had one goal: to establish an ongoing relationship between the two schools in order to help increase awareness of diversity and promote inclusive learning opportunities.



Within a month elementary and middle school children from Good Shepherd Academy came to Phoenix Center where they enjoyed breakfast in the school cafeteria with the students from Phoenix. Month after month, the children returned and the classes spent more time together, eating, doing craft projects and playing.

Overtime, friendships grew. At one point, the children asked to take a music class together and that is when the magic happened. The children decided to prepare to sing together at The Phoenix Center's spring concert. There was not a dry eye in the house.

The initiative grew out of a self-assessment process at The Phoenix Center. 'We wanted to create more opportunities for our students to spend time with typical peers,' said Gibbia. "This is a good start."

The Phoenix Center, an ASAH member school, serves children with autism and other complex disabilities.



"At one point, the children asked to take a music class together and that is when the magic happened."



Gerry Thiers
ASAH Executive Director

Penny Wise and Pound Foolish

We all know how important early intervention is. An extensive body of research shows that intensive, appropriate special education and therapies for at-risk infants, toddlers and young children makes a lifetime of difference.

Early childhood provides unique opportunities to “re-wire” the brain to learn language, social skills and pre-reading skills. In the field of autism, for instance, researchers found children who receive intensive, specialized services before age five are less likely to need supports over their lifetime than peers who did not receive such services.

In addition to the benefits to children, there are benefits to taxpayers. Studies have shown long-term cost savings in terms of decreased grade repetition, reduced special education spending, enhanced productivity, lower welfare costs, increased tax revenues and lower juvenile justice costs. One study looked at the financial impact of providing early intervention services for children with severe disabilities and found the savings over a lifetime can exceed two million dollars per person.

With such good data, one would expect that intensive, appropriate preschool services are a given. Unfortunately, the trend in New Jersey is headed in the wrong direction. ASAH member schools report that their specialized preschool programs are shrinking, while their middle school and high

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school programs are expanding. The children who are referred for services at an older age are described as having greater challenges in all areas: academic, social, physical, medical, behavioral – and emotional.

New Jersey children deserve better. Cutting corners and limiting access to effective, intensive services and therapies to preschoolers in the name of saving money is poor public policy. The decisions we make today about our youngest learners have an impact that will last a lifetime – not just for the child and his or her family, but also for generations of taxpayers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Thiers'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Gerry Thiers
ASAH Executive Director



NEW ASAH Preschool Guide

Our new guide to preschool services for students with disabilities is intended to help parents of our youngest children - those in the preschool years - understand and access the high quality, effective services they need to make a lifetime of difference! The free guide can be downloaded from the ASAH website: www.asah.org

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH.

Each year, ASAH recognizes exceptional individuals and educators who have made a difference in the lives of children with disabilities.

Congratulations to the 2012 ASAH Award Winners



**Legislator
of the Year:**
*NJ Senator
Jennifer Beck*



**Humanitarian
of the Year:**
*Arcelio Aponte
President,
NJ State Board of Ed.*



**ASAH
President's Award:**
*Bruce Litinger
Executive Director,
ECLC of NJ*



**Educator of the
Year Winner:**
*Susan Emmitt,
The Rugby School
at Woodfield*



**Related Services
Provider of the Year:**
*Sharon E. Luberto,
ECLC of NJ (Ho-Ho-Kus)*



**Paraprofessional
of the Year:**
*Jorron Jenkins,
The Children's Home*

Region Finalists

Region I

Educator of the Year - Jennifer Epstein, The Children's Therapy Center
Paraprofessional of the Year - Fernando Palma, The Children's Institute

Region II

Educator of the Year - Francine A. Giorello, The Midland School
Related Services Provider of the Year - Betsy K. Zindel, P.G. Chambers School
Paraprofessional of the Year - Sabrina Williams, P.G. Chambers School

Region III

Related Services Provider of the Year - Thomas Savage, The Center School
Paraprofessional of the Year - Barbara Shaw, Lakeview School

Region IV

Educator of the Year - Lida Stroup, Devereux NJ Center for Achievement
Related Services Provider of the Year - Jackie Ricketts, Larc School

ASAH Transitions

Dr. Steven Krapes, former Executive Director of The Forum School, former ASAH Board Member and Past ASAH President, retired last year.

David Panner, former Executive Director of Kingsway Learning Center, former ASAH Board Member and Past ASAH President, retired last year.

Philip Gartlan, former Executive Director of The Midland School, former ASAH Board Member and Past ASAH President, retired this year.

Barbara Markell, former Executive Director of Youth Consultation Service and former ASAH Board Member, retired this year.

Dr. Ronald F. Larkin, former Executive Director of Montgomery Academy, retired this year.

Capitol Connections



Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, left, visits Allegro School in Cedar Knolls.



Dr. Steven Morse, Exec. Director of Garfield Park Academy in Willingboro, meets with Congressman Jon Runyon in Washington, D.C.



*Visit our website
at www.asah.org*

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