

VITALITY REPORT

Experience A World Where All Individuals Flourish as Valued Members of Their Community



IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

GROUNDBREAKING ON NEW RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM FOR ADULTS WITH ASD

FELLOWSHIP CONTINUES AT WKU PUBLIC BROADCASTING

RECC STUDENTS SAY HELLO, HOLA, BONJOUR

Dear Friends,

We have much to look forward to this year as we enter 2020 with determination, optimism, and gratitude. The CEC is determined to make continued advancement in providing supports and programs for individuals and families with developmental delays and disabilities including autism spectrum disorders. We are optimistic that we will strengthen our capacity, working alongside our participants, stellar staff and community partners while pursuing our major goal of Building a World Where All Individuals Flourish as Valuable Members of Their Community. We are most grateful for your support and look forward to wonderful things to come in the new year. One of those things is the opening of the LifeWorks at WKU Program in August of 2020. You will hear more about this model program as the year progresses. We are committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals, families and communities. Please join us.

Wishing you much peace, joy, and happiness in 2020.

Mary Lloyd Moore

Mary Lloyd Moore, Ed.D., SLP-CCC

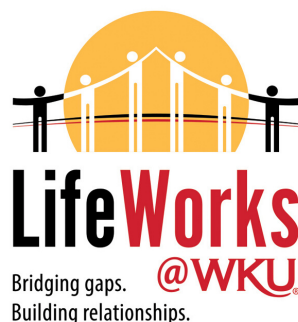
WKU Breaks Ground on Residential Program for Adults on the Autism Spectrum

by Aaron Mudd, BG Daily News

Speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony on October 21, 2019 for a new, two-year residential program designed to help adults on the autism spectrum join the workforce, Western Kentucky University President Timothy Caboni described the need it is expected to meet. Despite one in every 59 people being diagnosed with autism, “at age 21, the services to support these individuals become limited or they cease to exist. LifeWorks at WKU is a remarkable, great next step in supporting our Kelly Autism Program students and others in our region,” President Caboni said describing a program that will focus on promoting independent living, securing employment and community engagement for people on the autism spectrum.

During the ceremony, President Caboni was joined in making remarks by Joe Dan Beavers, president and CEO of LifeSkills; Ron Bunch, president and CEO of the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce; and Mary Lloyd Moore, executive director of the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex at WKU. Through a partnership with Wabuck Development, a development company based in Leitchfield, LifeWorks at WKU will provide accommodations for up to 26 people. The groundbreaking began a project to renovate apartments at 1328 Adams Street that is slated for completion by spring of next year.

LifeWorks will launch with six residents next fall. Through the program, residents will work for an employer of their choice and be matched with a mentor for support. They will also get instruction in navigating work and personal relationships and participate in group activities together. A typical day might include morning classes, afternoon job placement and coaching and personal time in the evening with group activities on occasion. The program could also provide learning opportunities for students studying social work, communication disorders, psychology, or counseling, among others. In addition to serving individuals within the autism continuum, LifeWorks at WKU could also serve as a national model that could be replicated.



Fellowship Continues At WKU Public Broadcasting

by Molly Swietek



WKU Public Broadcasting had a wonderful fall semester working with our first group of Brinkley Fellows. The students are fast learners and willing to tackle any task presented to them. Each student is excelling in their own area – from editing video footage in our television production unit to assisting in outreach initiatives with our donors – they’re each utilizing their skills to contribute in profound ways. One example is senior Brandon Woempner who works in the WKU Public Radio station. This semester he produced two radio feature stories about local initiatives at WKU. You can read and/or listen to all of his work by visiting wkyufm.org and typing his name into the search field.

We’re also excited to announce WKU Public Broadcasting was awarded a nearly \$250,000 two-year grant from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting to continue our work with the fellowship and to serve as a model organization for autism inclusion in the workplace. The project’s scope of work includes working with area businesses and other public broadcasting entities to help them establish and implement their own ASD employment programs. We look forward to sharing the results of this work as we forge ahead in 2020.

What is CEC's Value to WKU?

by Frank Kersting, Ed.D.

A parent once asked Dr. Moore: “What is the CEC’s value to Western?” Fair question! CEC’s Clinical Services are ‘The Beacon on the Hill’ for many families having a child diagnosed within the ASD continuum. Parents value our ‘service continuum,’ which provides comprehensive, best-practice interventions from pre-school all the way through young adulthood, as well as parent support. For Western, best practice holds the key.



Best practice is ‘the key’ because the services provided reflect research-based practices necessary for a university supported program. The CEC provides both comprehensive services for families as well as clinical and practical training opportunities to all university colleges, departments and programs. Currently, the CEC Complex provides clinical and practical training for numerous colleges and their departments.

The Departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders Social Work, Nursing and Psychology place their students at the CEC for clinical training experience. For example, the Communication Disorders’ students receive supervised practicum experience in communication therapy as well as emerging literacy through placement in the Big Red School and the Kelly Autism Program. An example of practical training would be the Business College assigning Entrepreneurial student majors to write a new program’s business plan; while the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences’ doctoral students are providing invaluable reports on several other programs’ strength and areas of growth.

Without that lynch-pin of ‘best practice,’ the CEC would not be offering comprehensive programming to families through our service continuum, as well as training future practitioners in current treatment procedures or providing practical, real-world experience. In short, this is a Win-Win for Western, families and the region.

A Caregiver's Perspective

My grandson, Hunter, started Prime Time at the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex in the fall of 2019. As an educator I knew Hunter needed a place to make friends and gain social skills, and Prime Time has helped him in both areas. He loves to attend each Monday and Wednesday and sometimes does not want to leave. Hunter is doing very well in academic areas at South Edmonson Elementary, but we were concerned that his rest and relaxation time consisted of too much screen time and isolated play.



Everyone noticed a positive change in Hunter as soon as he started Prime Time. His classroom teacher commented on his improvement in direction following. His PE teacher noted that Hunter was playing games like kickball with friends on the playground. We noticed that he was following through with social skills learned at Prime Time by practicing them at home. We especially enjoyed the giving compliments lesson. Prime Time has improved Hunter's quality of life.

It is our hope as a family that he will stay with the program and eventually be able to interview and apply for the Circle of Support college program. As an alumna of Western Kentucky University, I am so proud that my alma mater is supporting individuals and families in South Central Kentucky while providing wonderful hands on training to WKU students who will be ready to make a positive difference as educators and medical providers.

Sincerely,

Cindi Whittinghill



Financial Education Added for Families

by Shannon Sales, Ed.D.

The Family Resource Program collaborated with Thrivent Financial and Caslin & Cecil Attorney's office to educate on Special Needs planning and the positive impact it brings to our families. There are five classes to incorporate throughout the semester which starts in January – April 2020. Topics consist of the following:

- The Basics: An Introduction to Special Needs Planning
- Starting the Nitty Gritty
- Life Planning
- Estate Planning
- Your Family Story

All classes are scheduled on Fridays of each month. Dates are January 17th, February 7th, February 27th, March 20th, and April 17th from 10AM – 11AM. If anyone needs a private session for additional individual assistance, there is an opportunity for families to receive those services as well.

Family Fun Day 2020 Date Released

by Shannon Sales, Ed.D.

The Family Resource Program is hosting a Family Fun Day event at WKU Houchens L.T. Smith Stadium on **Friday, May 1, 2020 from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.** If it rains, the festivities will continue inside at E.A. Diddle Arena and parking is available and provided in the structure between both locations. The event will have several fun activities, games, and plenty of food to fill your tummies! It is for ALL families who have individuals with special needs in our community and surrounding counties. All individuals who want to participate and be a part of this awesome day are more than welcome. This is an opportunity for teachers, friends, parents, grandparents, caregivers, and therapists to come and support families while having a great time. It will be an amazing day that you WILL NOT forget. For more information, please contact the FRP office.



RECC Students Say Hello in Many Languages

by Beth Schaeffer



Students from the Renshaw Early Childhood Center (RECC) traveled the globe this fall, making stops on every continent. Children explored the music, food, animal life, landscape and traditions from the seven continents. As they neared the end of their small world journey, each student created a book of their favorite things from each stop along the way. One of the highlights from their journey was learning to say “hello” in a variety of languages. Konnichi wa, ola, jambo, buongirono, hola and hello all mean welcome, our friends are welcome here!

Children and families said their good-byes to Ericka Orndorff who left us to spend time with her family. Beth Schaeffer was welcomed as Director in early October and Sarah Conder was selected to fill Ericka’s position as Program Manager. We were very fortunate to have student teacher, Haley Green, with us. She was a familiar face to the children, having been a recent student worker. Five student workers and several speech clinicians were key in supporting children’s learning and development. Caroline Hudson was instrumental with the transition of new staff, helping Beth learn more about RECC and her new role. While we will still get to see Caroline in our classroom regularly in the spring, she has been named Director of Speech Language Pathology Services, keeping her very busy working with WKU students and children. Congratulations, Caroline!

We ended the semester with a fun family event, Cookies and Cocoa, with over 70 friends and family members participating. Decorating cookies, mixing toppings into cocoa, writing a letter to Santa or constructing gingerbread houses, there was fun for everyone. The best part of this event was the opportunity for quality family time, it just doesn’t get any better! Our last event of the semester gave parents the opportunity to run last minute errands on the last Friday morning before the break. This gave the RECC staff one last opportunity to spend time with our sweet students and that is the best!

Circle of Support Students Thrive

by Peyton Collins

Here at the Circle of Support program, we are preparing for another exciting semester at WKU! Four of our students will have the opportunity to participate in the Brinkley Fellowship on campus where they will improve on their vocational skills. The Center for Courageous Kids, Bowling Green Parks and Recreation, and the WKU IT department are partnering with us to provide summer internships to those enrolled in our program. We are so thankful for their collaboration and support of our students. As we all know, career readiness often requires not only a degree but real-life experience in the field.



We are happy to report that several of our first-year and continuing students are involved in various clubs and organizations on campus. For many, WKU is truly home and a place where they can flourish. In May, we are set to have four graduates! They have all worked so hard and we could not be happier for the achievements they have made!

Special Needs Expo Offers Families Hope

by Shannon Sale, Ed.D.

The Family Resource Program collaborates with several other organizations to create and host an awesome community event for families who have special needs. People are empowered to come together and gain great resources that might be new or unknown. This event is designed for families to learn about the services that are in the area and network with other individuals for support, commonalities, and encouragement.

The Special Needs Expo will be held at the Knicely Conference Center on Saturday, March 28th from 10AM – 3PM. There will be Autism screenings, vision screenings, occupational therapy assessments, physical therapy assessments, haircuts, arts & crafts, a fashion show and much more. This is the event of the year for our special needs families to enjoy a day of fun and fellowship. For more information, you can visit the expo website <https://www.specialneedsexpobg.org/> .

Hope to see you there!

Literacy Programs and CSD Students

by Caroline Hudson, MS, CCC-SLP

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

– Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss’ words were certainly embraced during the fall 2019 semester at the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex (CEC). The CEC serves as a student training facility for WKU students from a variety of programs of study. During the fall 2019 semester five student interns from the Communication Sciences and Disorders department were placed in Prime Time and four student interns from the CSD department were placed in the Renshaw Early Childhood Center (RECC). These students are studying to become speech-language pathologists. Speech-language pathologists play a direct role in the development and support of literacy, and the student interns from the CSD department were able to gain experience in effective ways to provide literacy rich instruction to participants in both CEC programs.

Student clinicians worked closely with RECC classroom teachers and a state licensed and nationally certified speech-language pathologist to promote communication within the classroom. One primary emphasis was developing each child’s emergent literacy skills. Emergent literacy builds future reading and vocabulary skills. Classroom teachers preselected appropriate books that directly correlated to this semester’s theme, *It’s A Small World*. The student interns promoted communication opportunities during shared reading time to help expand each child’s awareness of books, print, and writing. They also worked to create engaging literacy based activities. The dedicated time facilitated joint attention (the process of sharing an experience of observing by following gaze or pointing gestures), allowed repetition and practice of phrases and concepts in each book, promoted phonological awareness, and improved each child’s ability to answer reading comprehension questions. Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) supports and devices were utilized to make the curriculum accessible for all the young children. Prime Time participants worked in small group settings with the student interns on developing social communication skills.

Continued on the next page...

Literacy continued...

Prime Time staff are consistently focused on helping the participants learn to build healthy relationships in all areas of life. Bridges We Build: The Art of Making Friends curriculum from Scenicview Academy was utilized to guide the pragmatic instruction. The CSD interns used books and literacy based activities in conjunction with the pragmatic lessons to help Prime Time participants meet the following objectives: to feel like socializing can be a pleasant experience, to be motivated to use social skills in all environments, and to improve overall social effectiveness.

The WKU/CEC partnership continues to thrive. The student interns who completed their internship work at the CEC this fall received valuable clinical education experiences about the benefits of wrapping literacy into every objective written for participants of all ages. This in turn supported achievement of goals in RECC and Prime Time. CEC participants continue to achieve milestones each and every day. In addition, WKU students are learning best practices right here at the CEC. Therefore, when participants complete their CEC programs or students graduate from WKU we send them out in the world confident that they will fulfill Dr. Seuss's prophecy. "And will you succeed? Yes you will indeed! (98 and $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed."

Coffee Hours Provide Vital Information for Families

by Shannon Sales, Ed.D.

The Family Resource Program enjoyed the last Coffee Hour of the year, which was held on Friday November 1, 2019 from 10:00AM - 11:00AM. The topic focused on IEPs (Individual Educational Plan) and 504 plans presented by Michelle Antle who is a Field Training Coordinator through GRREC. The presentation was AMAZING! The families gained a lot of clarity and were motivated to move forward with the process to pursue assistance needed for their children. More workshops to come! Stay tuned...



**We hope
you've
had a
ball with
us.**



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Feb. 10 | Beginning of CEC Services (RECC, KAP, CDC) |
| Mar. 9-13 | WKU Spring Break |
| Mar. 28 | Special Needs Expo |
| Apr. 18 | LifeSkills Run/Walk for Autism |
| May 1 | End of CEC Services (RECC, KAP, CDC) |
| May 1 | Family Fun Day |
| May 15-16 | WKU Graduation |

