

UPDATES ON THE STUDENTS...



# The AJ Foundation

2009 Newsletter

ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 2009

## Fulfilling a Dream...Expansion Complete

This fall, students returning to the Comprehensive Learning Center (CLC) found a brand new 6,000 sq. ft. building on campus. The new facility houses the Upper Elementary and Secondary Modules and will offer the students with autism vastly improved life skills and vocational skills training environments. The building includes a large conference/vocational training room, a new gym, a full kitchen and a laundry room. It will also house an adult life skills program planned for 2011.

CLC leases the building, which made the expansion much easier to accomplish. Funding for furniture and equipment was raised through sponsors who have generously contributed nearly \$80,000 to date, as well as grants from Ronald McDonald House



Joanne Corless, President and founder of the AJ Foundation joins her son AJ in cutting the ribbon marking the opening of CLC's new 6,000 square foot building. In background are: Amanda Flavell, Co-Director of Education, and property owners Theresa Semenuk, Tess Glancey and Brian Glancey.

Charities, the Connelly Foundation, Foundations Community Partnership, the TJ Kavanagh Foundation and the Schrenk Foundation.

"We are grateful to those who made this possible and are very excited about our new building,"

explains Michele Jones, Co-Director of Education. "We not only have more classroom and meeting space, but improved facilities to teach independence in many other areas—we want our students to learn to care for themselves." (continued pg. 5)

## Stepping Out Into the Community

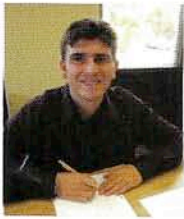
Taking 5 year old Brandon to the pediatrician's office used to be a dreaded event. "It was a nightmare," relates his mother, Sherrie, "He would run around the office, scream, wouldn't even sit on the exam table." A year later, it's a different story, "CLC has made a huge difference for Brandon. At his last well visit he fully cooperated—had his vision, hearing, heart and lungs checked, even answered the doctor's

questions." The pediatrician was impressed. "He asked what we had done, said he had never seen a transformation like this before."

Taking children with autism into the community can be extremely challenging for parents, and preparing students for those transitions is an important part of CLC's program. "Doctor visits, haircuts, shopping trips, attending a sibling's dance recital are im-

portant life events that many parents take for granted but require special programming for our students," explains Co-Director Amanda Flavell. "Often it's a matter of shaping component skills, the length of the event, or building a repertoire of appropriate activities. For example, a schedule of quiet activities may make a long plane ride much more successful for a student." (continued on page 5)

# So How Are They Doing Anyway?



Aj (20), works two paid part-time positions with minimal job coaching from CLC staff members.



Alexis (16), is learning to sort, wash and fold laundry independently.



Ryan (14), is learning to use his i-touch to listen to music, play games and keep his daily schedule.

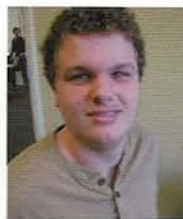


Ivy (13), is learning to participate in social activities like shopping and going to the movies with typically developing peers.

Dan (17), recently began a part-time position shelving books and movies at the county library.



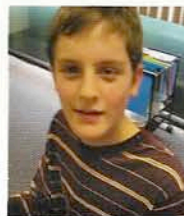
Connor (14), learned to tolerate an actual blood draw after practicing at CLC.



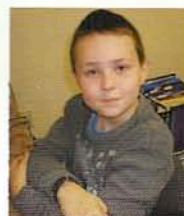
Connor (12), is learning office skills like answering the telephone, filing and making copies.



Will (12), is learning to type documents in Microsoft Word.



Colin (11), is learning to make purchases in the community.



Lucas (9), learned to check out library books and is learning to write book reports.



Drake (9), is learning how to answer questions about stories he reads.



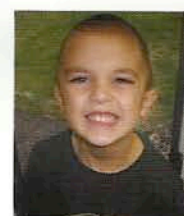
Michael (8), is learning math and phonics skills.



Patrick (8), started in July & learned to follow a home morning routine independently.



Brian (7), started in September. He is learning to follow an activity schedule.



Brandon (5), learned to follow group directions and is in an after-school gym program.

Madison (8), one of our newest students, is learning handwriting and monetary concepts.



Alex (8), is learning to converse with his teachers and peers throughout the day.



Ethan (6), is learning to get dressed independently.



Bryn (4), learned to identify letters and numbers. She is learning to write her name.



## Movin' on Up...Transition to Typical Programs



We are thrilled to report that A.H. and K.C. have successfully made the transition to placements in typical classrooms in their home school districts. "Studies show that early intensive intervention using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis can drastically alter the outcomes for students with

autism. These two students are the real life examples. "We will miss these two students at CLC, but we are so pleased by their progress," comments co-Director Michele Jones. "This is one of the many positive outcomes for students at CLC that make our jobs very rewarding."



Your participation in AJ Foundation fundraisers raised over \$267,000 this year. Your generosity has allowed us to make CLC's program available to more children with autism. Thank you!

Check our website [www.ajfoundation.org](http://www.ajfoundation.org) for updates on fundraisers

The CLC vehicle donation program provided over \$22,000 to the school this year. Have a vehicle to donate? Call (215) 322-7852



# Fundraisers for 2010

January 30, 2010  
**Texas Hold em'**



February 26, 2010  
**Beef n' Beer**



March 13, 2010  
**Maggio's 50's Night**



April 24, 2010  
**Casino Night!!!**



May 2010  
**AJF 5K/10K & 1 mile walk**



July 17, 2010  
**Rugby Festival & Pig Roast**



October 2010  
**AJF 50 Bike Tour**



October 2010  
**Golf Tournament**



## Cash in Your Clunker for CLC

Tired of looking at that old junker sitting in your driveway, but don't know what to do with it? Here's a simple solution...donate it to the Comprehensive Learning Center.

We will arrange for it to be towed and auctioned. You will receive a receipt for the full price the vehicle sold for at auction which can be deducted on your taxes. You just make

a simple phone call to (215) 322-7852. We take care of the rest.

It doesn't matter which state you live in, we can arrange for pick-up anywhere in the U.S. and you pay nothing. The CLC Vehicle Donation Program covers all vehicles including motorcycles and boats and the vehicle does not have to be in working order.

This past year, CLC has received over \$22,000 through this program. Your vehicle will not only bring you a hefty tax deduction, but will benefit children with autism as well.

Please tell your friends and neighbors about this program.

To donate a vehicle, call (215) 322-7852. Please have your title available when you call.

## GoodShop for the Holidays

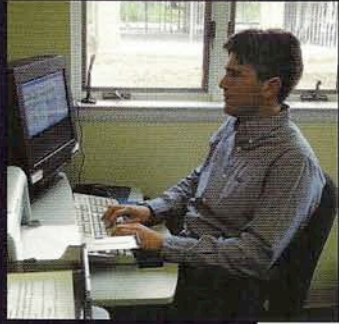
By accessing your favorite on line shopping sites, like Amazon, Lands End and Toys R Us through *GoodShop*, 1% to 30% of what you spend is donated directly to the AJ Foundation.

It's so simple:

1. Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)
2. Click on the icon for *GoodShop*. Be sure to enter AJ Foundation For Children With Autism in the space that says

"Who do you shop for?"

3. Find the vendor you want; click on their icon and shop as you normally would. The vendor will donate up to 30% of expenditures directly to AJF.



*"We continue to give AJ new jobs where he can use his computer skills. We are very happy he is here to help us and I hope this job is as rewarding for him as it is for us to have him here."*

*Diane DiMartino  
Wouch Maloney & Co.*



*"We want our students to participate in the events that make them active members of their families and communities."*

*Amanda Flavell*

## CLC Students Head off to Work

Twice a week, 20 year old CLC student AJ Corless takes a little extra care preparing for his day. AJ is heading to work at Wouch Maloney & Co. a local accounting firm where he is employed part-time. AJ might be filing updates for accounting reference materials, creating labels for client mailings or alphabetizing paperwork for client charts. But whatever he does he strives to work meticulously and efficiently, as his supervisor reported in a recent evaluation, "AJ input over 150 client addresses into label format in Word. He did a fantastic job

and completed the task in an hour and a half...nobody here could have done that! "

AJ is CLC's oldest student and the first to step out into the work place. "Preparing students for meaningful work by age 21 is a goal we take very seriously," explains Co-Director of Education Amanda Flavell. Each of the students in the Upper Elementary and Secondary Modules has at least one vocational or pre-vocational goal in their educational programs. While most concentrate on clerical skills like typing, filing, and mail assembly, students are prepared

for other jobs as well.

"A second student just started a volunteer position shelving books and movies at the County Library," Ms Flavell reports. "The skill is practiced at school first, then on site with a CLC job coach. The job coach facilitates communication and performance. In time, if a student can be independent, the job coach is faded."

AJ works under the direction of his supervisor on site and enjoys working. "The best part is making my own money!," he exclaims.

AJ just started a second job at a local supermarket.

### CLC Expansion

(continued from page 1)

The new kitchen and laundry rooms are critical teaching areas in the new building. Preparing foods, setting a table, unloading a dishwasher and doing laundry are important instructional goals for CLC's students as they develop independent living skills. The same is true for showering, dressing and personal hygiene. The new

facility provides areas for learning these skills, designed like those found in typical homes to promote skill transfer.

The new building provides improved vocational training facilities as well. "With our new phone system we have lines dedicated for our students to learn office skills like answering the telephone and taking messages. We have new computers and software to

teach word processing and data entry," explains Ms. Jones.

Aside from meeting space, the new conference room provides the students a venue to complete bulk mail assembly tasks for the AJ Foundation and local businesses. AJF President, Joanne Corless, explains, "The students are learning skills they can use for future employment and we get the job done efficiently. It's a win-win for everyone! "

### Stepping Out... (continued from page 1)

Shopping is an activity in which nearly all the Elementary and Secondary students participate. "Once the requisite money skills are in place we start practicing in our 'store' at CLC equipped with a real cash register and items they might like to buy," Ms. Flavell explains. "Students are prepared for the wide variety of questions they may be asked and use real

money to make purchases. They are then ready to make shopping trips in the community with CLC staff and eventually with their parents. "

CLC staff have helped children to learn leisure activities like bowling, biking and running so they can participate in these activities with their families. "We really enjoyed the AJ Foundation Bike ride for au-

tism," CLC parent Dan Lehner shares, "It was great to be able to have Dan ride with us. "

CLC staff have even helped students prepare for religious milestones like Bar Mitzvah and First Communion.

"We want our students to participate in the events that make them active members of their families and communities." explains Ms. Flavell.

The AJ Foundation  
P.O. Box 234  
Wycombe, PA 18980

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## 1 in 91 Children...the Societal Cost of Autism

A national report released in the journal *Pediatrics* (10/05/09), revealed that autism rates have jumped from 1 in 150 in 2007 to 1 in 91 children today. That is 1% of U.S. children aged 3 to 17.

The Autism Society of America estimates that it costs 3.5 to 5 million dollars to care for an individual with autism throughout their lifetime. Estimates vary on the annual aggregate cost, but the Autism Society

projects it to be 60 billion dollars. The majority of that cost is for adult services and can be greatly remediated through early intensive intervention using ABA. Here are the facts:

Every student that achieves typical functioning will save taxpayers between 1.7 and 3.0 million dollars in the cost of lifetime services.<sup>1</sup>

Even those that achieve partial independence and can work part time will

save taxpayers over a million dollars.<sup>2</sup>

Intensive Early Intervention using ABA is the only treatment with replicated research to back it's effectiveness.

Programs, like CLC's, are saving money, preserving families and creating futures for children with autism.

<sup>1</sup>Ganz, M. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. 2007;161(4)

<sup>2</sup>Jacobson J, Mulick J, Green G. *Behavioral Interventions*. 1998;13 210-226.

**Autism** is a lifelong developmental disability that usually appears in the first 3 years of life. Symptoms of autism can vary among 4 categories:

- Disturbances in the rate and appearance of social and language skills;
- Unusual response to sensory stimuli;
- Abnormal ways of relating to people, objects or events;
- Severely impaired language acquisition and comprehension.

If you suspect autism in your child, contact your pediatrician as soon as possible. Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial to your child's future. For information about The Comprehensive Learning Center : [www.clcschool.net](http://www.clcschool.net)

### Contact Us

For information or to make a donation:

**The AJ Foundation  
For Children With Autism**

P.O. Box 234  
Wycombe, PA 18980  
(215)598-8175

Email: [info@ajfoundation.org](mailto:info@ajfoundation.org)  
Website: [www.ajfoundation.org](http://www.ajfoundation.org)  
Tax ID# 23-2887692

# Biking it for Autism-- The AJF 50

Seeking a fun healthy activity for the whole family? The AJ Foundation bike event might be just what you are looking for. Twelve miles of biking paths winding through beautiful Bucks County. Serious riders can take the AJF 50 challenge, a more competitive 50 mile ride. This year's event raised \$21,000. Special thanks to Cognizant



and Bicycle Pro volunteers! Join us in October 2010!



**CLC Students Dan , Alexis , AJ and Ivy pose for a group photo after participating in the 12 mile leg of the AJF 50.**

# Casino Night...Always a Winner!

Wheels were spinning, dice were rolling at AJ Foundations 11th annual Casino night . Over 475 came out to try their luck at winning fabulous prize packages raising over \$74,000 for AJF and CLC. Prizes included: LCD TV, weekend getaways, gaming systems, entertainment tix and shopping sprees, Join us in April!

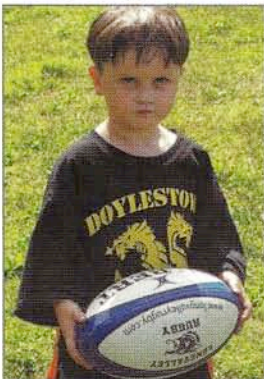


Join us in April!

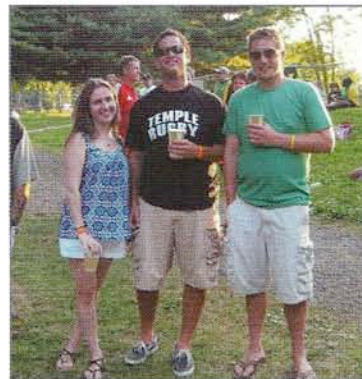


*"There are some really fabulous prize packages, each worth \$150 - \$500. Great dinner and great fun!"*  
**Edie Morlock**  
2009 attendee

# Rugby Festival & Pig Roast For Autism



Rugby enthusiasts young and not so young alike enjoyed an afternoon of great food, cold beer and wild rugby at the 12th Annual Rugby Festival and Pig Roast, raising \$31,800 for the AJ Foundation and CLC. The event held at Briarwood Day Camp in Furlong included 3 Rugby matches, food, refreshments, swimming, tennis, volleyball. Live music too! Join us in July 2010!



*"It's like a big outdoor party, lots to do, lots to eat and drink, lots of fun!"*  
**Shannon Carroll**