

IMPACT

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND SUPPORTERS OF THE LEARNING TREE

A NEW YEAR...A NEW WOODY'S SONG SCHOOL

One of the first phases of exciting future plans for The Learning Tree involves Woody's Song School in Mobile. In November, the school relocated to a building across the street from its original location on Able Court. For many years the School has been unable to add new children to the program due to lack of adequate funding and space. The new site offers increased square footage to expand the program to six classrooms, add a new vocational training area, and an applied behavior analysis clinic. The vocational area will be designed to help the students develop their life skills, to include a kitchen and work training areas. One of the new autism centers will be located in the same building. •



Autism Services to Expand Across State

The Learning Tree has announced plans to open four new Autism Centers this year in Anniston, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile. "The Centers will provide direct, individualized applied behavioral analysis (ABA) services to children with autism, said Dr. Marc Williams." The Center's services will provide support for communication, social, and behavior problems, as well as provide information, consultation, and technical assistance for families and professionals. A fully-operational clinic would serve 40-50 children in a twelve month period. Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts and Registered Behavior Technicians will administer the programs. The Center will operate Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm, year round. Insurance coverage will be available for the ABA services, with some limitations.

Matthew Busick Ph.D., BCBA, formerly from Tallahassee, Florida, will oversee the development of the new centers across the state. For information please contact him at mbusick@learning-tree.org. (205) 718-9519. •



The Learning Tree

Helping Children Learn and Grow

Established in 1983, The Learning Tree, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to children and adolescents with significant educational, medical, and behavioral challenges; helping them develop and maintain a quality of life expected by non-disabled members of their family and community.

The Learning Tree, Inc. and its programs admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

The Learning Tree is governed by a volunteer board of directors, representative of the primary service areas in the State of Alabama.

Board of Directors

- Mr. Jimmie Brown
- Dr. John Caldwell
- Ms. Angie Coon
- Ms. Katie Dougherty
- Mr. Nathan Handmacher
- Ms. Allison Kendall
- Dr. Marcia Rossi
- Dr. Jim Siders
- Mr. Alan Taunton

This newsletter is published by The Learning Tree, Resource Development Department compiled and distributed by coordinating offices located in these Alabama cities: Anniston/Jacksonville, Auburn/Talassee, and Mobile.

The Learning Tree, Inc.

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Pat Murphy

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Whitney Hester

Regional Director-Mobile

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Operations Director

Ben Rogers

Resource Development Director

Sheila Sears

Member of the Alabama Autism Providers Network Collaborating, Advocating and Caring for People with ASD

www.al-autismproviders.net



Message from the Executive Director, Dr. Marc Williams:

Plans are quickly developing for many new Learning Tree opportunities to help more children on the autism spectrum. Early this year we plan to open Autism Centers in Birmingham, Anniston, Montgomery and Mobile. Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention for preschool-aged children and Challenging Behavior Clinical Services for school-aged children will be available through the Centers. At full capacity each center should ultimately serve 40-50 children annually.

The passage of the “autism bill” last fall established that applied behavior analysis (ABA) services would be eligible for insurance reimbursement. ABA services has proven to be one of the most effective therapies for children on the spectrum. This reimbursement will indeed benefit hundreds of families.

Late in 2017 we welcomed Matthew Busick Ph.D., BCBA, to The Learning Tree. He will be helping us get the new centers up and running. Dr. Busick came to us from Tallahassee, Florida.

The year 2018 is sure to be one of our busiest years yet with all that is on the horizon. I hope that you will continue to support The Learning Tree and join us in our enthusiasm as the year unfolds.

Happy New Year!

Marc

The Second Annual “Chip in for Children” Golf Tournament

The “Chip in for Children” golf tournament was held on a blistering August day at the Auburn University Club. The winners were; 1st place - iHeart Media, 2nd place - Guardian Credit Union and 3rd place - Tommy Hatchett's team. Many thanks to all of our golfers that came out to play. Lunch Sponsors included Neptune Technology Group and Three Lakes Dental. Hole sponsors were Sizemore and Sizemore, A-1 Employment, Auburn University Club, Blue Ridge Mountain Water, BTS and Associates, ServPro, The UPS Store, Trustmark Bank, Sears Law Firm, PC and Tallapoosa Publishers. Panera Bread furnished the pastries, bagels and cookies for breakfast. Publix furnished the snacks, water and gator-aid and Premium Beverages provided the drinks.



2nd Place – Guardian Credit Union
L-R – Stephanie Weldon and Torey Hatfield



1st place – iHeart Media
L-R – Stephanie Weldon and Ben Taylor



3rd Place – Tommy Hatchett's team
L-R – Steve Schmitt, Michael Schmitt, Tommy Hatchett and Kim Johnston



New member Sheila Sears at the Hoover Chamber of Commerce event

Autism Shines Gala



From L to R: Erica Brown, Stephanie Weldon, Phyllis & Marc Williams, Jim & Sheila Sears

Angling for Autism Fishing Tournament

The fourth annual Angling for Autism fishing tournament was held in November at Wind Creek State Park in Alexander City. Fifty boats registered bright and early in hopes to win the top prize of \$1,500. The first place winner was Chris Studdard and Greg Vick with the top weight of 13 lbs; second place went to Ryan Stewart and David Swatts with 12.96 lbs; and third place went to Steve Morgan and Jeff Tapley. The prize for top male/female team went to Drew and Kayra Davis. The prize for top parent/child went to Vance and Dylan Kilgore. A big thank you to Dallas Weldon for handling the weigh in for us this year. He also was there bright and early to check live wells and “blast off” the boaters at safe daylight. Taconya Goar and Phillip Whatley came out early in the morning to help Dallas with live well checks. Whitney Watson and Amanda Platt were there too to help with registration early in the morning. Cory and Steve Hammonds, Jackie Strum, and Brittney Hornsby also assisted with the weigh in. A big thanks to our sponsors - Bama Budweiser, AES Industries; Tallassee True Value; Lyon, Fry, Cadden Insurance; PrimeSouth Bank; A.M.P.S.; E&I, Inc., Tallassee Automotive, Tallassee Rotary, Tallassee Kiwanis Club, Lumpkin Pest Control, BTS & Associates, and Taco Mama.



1st place Chris Studdard and Greg Vick



Big fish - Jimmy Reeves



2nd place Ryan Stewart



3rd place Steve Morgan

Tallassee Residential School and Auburn Preschool Employee News

Congratulations to Haily Owen and Jamie Hammond on their marriage, August 21st.

Anniversaries:

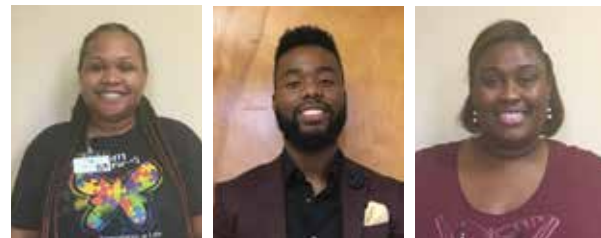
- 12 Years, Jacqueline Strum and Lakeisha Purter
- 11 Years, Alfred Hollman
- 10 Years, Ramona Heil-Norris
- 5 years, Rogelyn Taylor, Jowaune Williams, Elizabeth Proulx and Tiffany Ford



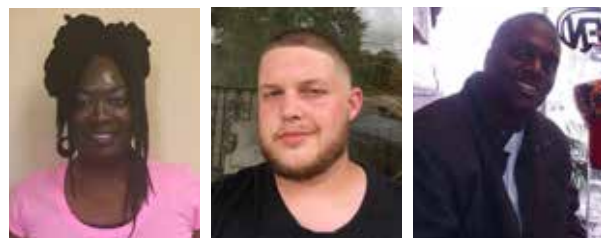
12 Years Jacqueline Strum, 12 Years Lakeisha Purter, 11 Years Alfred Hollman, 10 Years Ramona Heil-Norris

Promotions at Tallassee campus:

Amanda Simmons, Assistant of Fiscal Processes in Operations.
 R'Dellius Davis, Training Coordinator.
 Nakitta Tatum, Instructional Support Manager.
 Jacqueline Strum, Adult Day Service Manager.
 Joseph Millwood, Group Home Supervisor.
 Karriem Abdullah, Group Home Supervisor.



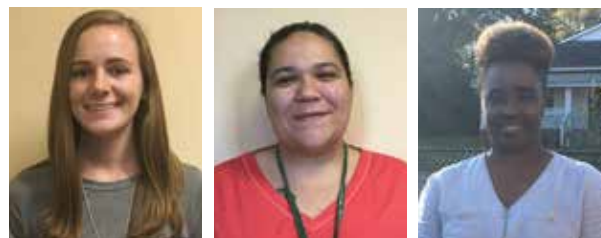
Amanda Simmons, R'Dellius Davis, Nakitta Tatum



Jacqueline Strum, Joseph Millwood, Karriem Abdullah

New Employees:

Welcome Brittney Norrell, Instructional Support Manager.
 Welcome Licensed Practical Nurses, Hannah Brill and Michelle Simmons to the nursing department.



Brittney Norrell, Hannah Brill, Michelle Simmons

Tricks or Treats

Halloween day was a fun day at the Tallassee Residential School. Students dressed in costumes and came to school looking for treats...not tricks! On Halloween night, they visited the First United Methodist Church for Trunk or Treat. The students loved going out in the community to participate in the spooky activities. Dr. Marc (the shark) and wife, Phyllis joined in on the fun too!



Dam Century Bike Ride

The Tallassee Chamber of Commerce presented the Tallassee Residential School with a \$500 check from the proceeds of the 2017 Dam Century Bike Ride.



Pictured L to R: Rod Cater, Stephanie Weldon, Victoria Suggs, Kat Raiford, Penny Sorrell and Laurie Rygiel.

Thanksgiving

It was a wonderful Thanksgiving Day feast serving our family and friends. There was a traditional display of Thanksgiving trimmings, and banana pudding for dessert! The students, parents and staff enjoyed a very nice holiday time talking and sharing in a cozy dining room setting...which was actually a gym transformed.



Landon's Family

Cain's Family



Gina's Family

Maya and her mom

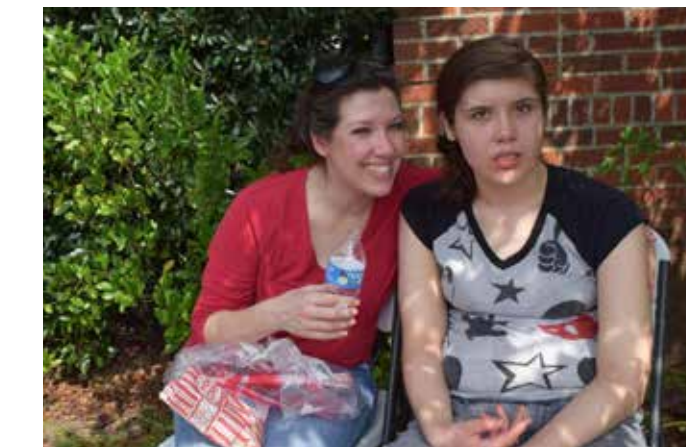
Graduation Day

The Tallassee residential school graduated 6 students this year, Jackson, Desmond, Ryan, Sue, Justice and Jalen. This was the largest graduating class since the school opened. The ceremony was held at the elementary school due to the large number of friends and family in attendance. A reception followed the ceremony that included refreshments and best wishes.



Tallassee's First Fall Carnival

The residential staff coordinated a fall carnival for the students and parents. The students enjoyed dunking Mr. Phillip and Ms. Haily in the dunking booth and throwing pies at Ms. Haily, Mr. Ken and nurse Cindy. The nursing staff painted faces and there were carnival games such as a hoops machine, balloon darts, bungee slam dunk bounce house, an indoor bounce house and water slides. And of course, a carnival wouldn't be complete without the food. They enjoyed, popcorn, snow cones, candied apples, hotdogs and sodas.



BOOTS AND BOW TIES
 A NIGHT TO SUPPORT THE LEARNING TREE
 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16
 6:30 P.M.
 AG HERITAGE PARK
 620A SOUTH DONAHUE DRIVE
 AUBURN, ALABAMA
 \$65 PER PERSON
 COMPLIMENTARY DRINK TICKET
 DINNER, SILENT AUCTION,
 GAMES, AND DJ & MUSIC

Bestway Donation

Eleven schools across the country were awarded \$2,000 in a Facebook competition sponsored by Best Way-Rent to Own. Entries in the competition required a brief Facebook blurb about why your school deserved the donation. Breanna Kitchen, nursing department employee, wrote a blurb describing her love for The Learning Tree, and the children served at the Jacksonville campus.

As a result. The Learning Tree was chosen as a recipient of a donation out of literally thousands of entries. Best Way of Anniston store manager, Sondra Gillilan, arrived at the Jacksonville campus to deliver a \$2,000 donation in person, and meet a few of the students. The funds will be used for a computer lab for the students. Thank you to the Best Way of Anniston and Oxford for supporting our organization!



Autos for Autism Car Show

The first annual Autos for Autism car show, presented by Jacksonville Muffler and Auto Repair, was held in Jacksonville, Alabama with over 40 cars to show. The event was free to attend for spectators, allowing them to enjoy and view some of the most popular muscle, modern, and vintage cars around.



Handmade, student designed awards were presented to several categories, including Best in Show, Kids Choice, Presenters Choice, and best from each decade. The awards were made of old car parts and tools, painted silver and gold, and assembled to make original keepsakes for the winners.

Door prizes were awarded, including a new set of tires, autism memorabilia, oil changes, car wash buckets, and more, all donated from local businesses such as O'Reilly's, Auto Zone, Advance Auto Parts, and more.

We appreciate all who attended the car show, traveling from as far as 3 hours away to celebrate the children and displaying their gorgeous cars. The Learning Tree was able to rev' up autism awareness with their new friends, and we look forward to seeing those faces again next year!

Early Intervention Conference

Jennifer Wythe, Clinical Coordinator, and Aimee Spruill, Preschool Director, at The Little Tree Preschool in Anniston, were chosen as presenters at the All Systems Go! Early Intervention and Preschool Conference, in Huntsville. Parent presenter, Tametria Conner from Atlanta, Georgia also presented.



Their topic was "Twinkling Stars: Implementing Effective Behavior Principles for Children with Autism and Other Special Needs". The presentation defined Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), addressed myths and misconceptions of ABA, and offered strategies on implementing ABA in home therapy sessions.

Congrats to our professional 'stars' who call The Little Tree Preschool home!

Anniston's Run for HOPE 10k

Veterans Day has been celebrated on November 11th, honoring our military veterans, since 1938. The Learning Tree honorary Run for HOPE 10k is held annually on Veterans Day weekend. The 2017 trek on Fort McClellan started and ended at The Little Tree Preschool. Wildlife, including deer and turkey, and gorgeous historical buildings are all a part of the scenery on the 6.2 mile course including 10 hills, with ranges of difficulty.

Dr. Herndon, from Alexandria, Alabama, and their Jack Henry team members walked a total of 3.7 miles. The team walked in honor of Jack Henry, a child diagnosed with autism that was close to all of their hearts. The Learning Tree was privileged to have them join the day and spread their love for a beautiful little boy. Awards were provided to the top 3 female and male overall runners, and to the top runners of each category, 19 and under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70+.

Top Male Overall:

Jacoby Dove 39:46
Jeremy Maloney 40:37
Jason Levi 43:51

Top Female Overall:

Brooke Nelson 45:23
Nicole Dieckow 46:58
Mandy Williams 53:28



SAVE THE DATE

Pediatrics Plus

presents the 7th Annual

Aces for Autism Gala

Saturday, April 28th, 2018

Proceeds benefit The Learning Tree programs, The Little Tree Preschool of Anniston and the Residential school of Jacksonville.

Saturday, April 28, 2018
6pm - 10pm
Anniston Meeting Center
Anniston, Alabama

Sponsorships available
Silent auction donation items welcomed!

Contact Erica Brown at
ebrown@learning-tree.org
or (256) 490-1648.

For info, visit learning-tree.org/events

ARC Awards Recognize Learning Tree Supporters

The Mobile ARC awards were presented at their annual meeting in September. Receiving awards from The Learning Tree were:

Distinguished Advocate of the Year Award – Dr. Maureen Baldy, Mobile Premier Pediatric Dentistry

Family of the Year – The Rice Family



Dr. Baldy was recognized for her work with adults and children with developmental disabilities. She currently has 512 active special needs patients. Of those, more than 330 live in community group homes. Dr. Baldy's patience and calm demeanor, as well as her loving disposition, help her to work with the most severe patients. She asked and was granted a special Dental Operating Suite at Children's and Women's Hospital to care for the more severely mentally

and physically challenged patients. Dr. Baldy is an asset to the community and The Learning Tree is proud to she was recognized for her efforts.

The Rice Family works tirelessly to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities have every opportunity to succeed. John and Constance Rice are the parents of 4 year-old twin daughters, Harper and Stella. Harper and Stella attend Little Tree Preschool. While managing the demands of two small children, they still find time to volunteer for events at The Learning Tree and support other local advocacy agencies. They actively lobbied to see that House Bill 284 mandating insurance coverage for autism therapies was passed. We are grateful to John and Constance for their tireless support of The Learning Tree.



John and Constance Rice

Local Church Hosts Holiday Event

The youth at Christ United Methodist Church recently hosted a Christmas party for the kids at The Learning Tree's Residential School. The kiddos were treated to Christmas goodies, games, arts and crafts and a dance party. Leigh Contratto and Mike Rollins, Christ UMC's youth pastors and their youth group made everyone feel welcome. The Learning Tree staff and families are most appreciative for the love and fellowship that was extended to our kids. Thank you for all of your hard work.



Kilborn's Kids Camp Grace Day

Kilborn's Kids enjoyed a beautiful day at Camp Grace in November. They rode horses, fished, rode on a raft and played on inflatables. This is an annual event that the kid's look forward to every year. Kilborn's Kids is a scout-like program for the children in Woody's Song School and the Residential School in Mobile, and is supported by local attorney, Vincent Kilborn and the Joseph Treadwell Foundation. Angie Cieutat coordinates the program.



Mobile Programs Celebrate Fall

The children at Woody's Song School, the Residential School and Little Tree Preschool celebrated fall with costumes, games, food and lots of fun. The older children at Woody's Song School and Residential School had a great time dressing up in creative costumes. There was a troll, witches, super heroes, aliens and minions. The staff of each classroom chose group costumes. We would like to thank the Project Outreach students at E. R. Dickson Elementary School for coming out to lend a hand. A special thank you goes out to Cindy Fulford for coordinating this annual event with other Woody's Song parents. Not to be outdone, Little Tree Preschool hosted a Halloween party as well. Each child in costume, trick or treated down the hall to Mobile County's Early Intervention offices and enjoyed special Halloween arts and crafts projects.



3rd Annual Hayley's Care Carnival

The corner of Dauphin and North Jackson streets were alive with activity at the 3rd Annual Hayley's Care Carnival to benefit Woody's Song School. More than \$2,400 was raised! The street carnival featured carnival games, live music and raffle items. Local 15's own, Darwin Singleton once again played the target to many pies in the face. The carnival was visited by some very interesting human puppets, as well. A "Split the Pot" drawing was held to benefit Little Tree Preschool. Brittany Mistich organized the event. Thank you to everyone that helped to make this event such a success.





The
Learning
Tree

Helping Children Learn and Grow

Resource Development Office
205 Lambert Avenue, Suite B
Mobile, AL 36604

www.learning-tree.org



A NIGHT AT THE RACES

benefitting The Learning Tree

Thursday, May 3, 2018

Huge Silent Auction
Filmed Horse Racing
Gourmet Food and Entertainment

For more information, contact Teresa Atkins, 251-331-2633

**Americas First Credit Union
purchases Poinsettias to support
Holiday Helping Hearts program.**



L to R: Stefan Barnette, Tricia Lacey, Terry Sanderson

Anniston/Jacksonville
256-447-9349

Auburn/Tallassee
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251-649-4420

Resource Development
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