

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

IMPACT

Celebrating 35 Years Serving Children

Growing Independence Behavioral Services Now Open Across The State

The Learning Tree, Inc. now offers a new opportunity to access applied behavior analysis services (ABA) in a clinic setting. Growing Independence Behavioral Services clinics are located in Anniston, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile.

ABA therapy is available for preschool and school-age children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum

disorder (ASD). ABA is a scientifically based process for teaching and changing behavior, proven effective for children with autism.

"It gives me more pleasure than you can imagine that we now have four new ABA clinics open and operating, said Dr. Marc Williams, Executive Director."



Licensed Behavior Analysts and Registered Behavior Therapists conduct assessments and manage all aspects of behavioral programming. The clinics plan to serve 20-30 children each year. To inquire about Growing Independence Behavioral Services, contact Director, Matthew Busick, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, mbusick@learning-tree.org or (205) 718-9519.

"Earlier this year working with our consultant, Michelle Stark with Red Sage Communications, Inc., the Board of Directors voted to name the new ABA clinics, Growing Independence Behavioral Services," said Dr. Marcia Rossi, Board President. "Congratulations to Dr. Marc Williams, our Executive Director, for beginning this new chapter in The Learning Tree's development as an organization, as we continue to expand our ability to serve children throughout the state, she added." Other members of the Board include Allison Kendall, Nathan Handmacher, Angie Coon, Alan Taunton, Jimmie Brown, Katie Dougherty, and Dr. John Caldwell.



*Anniston Clinic
on Powers Ave.*



*Birmingham Clinic
on Cahaba Valley
Drive*



*Mobile Clinic on
Able Court*



**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.

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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/Tallassee, and Mobile.

The Learning Tree, Inc. Administrative Office
101 S. Dubois Street
PO Box 780639
Tallassee, AL 36078
334-252-0025

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www.al-autismproviders.net



Statewide Support Continues

The Learning Tree is grateful for the support of local and state foundations and business and government support from across the state in 2018.

- The Junior League of Lee County gave \$1,988 to purchase 2 MyRider tandem bikes, 2 Radio Flyer Pathfinder wagons, 10 sets of Just Jump It Steppers, 2 sets of parachutes, 2 sets of playground, 5 MyRider midi bikes and 2 sets of jumping bags for the Auburn Preschool.
- Lake Martin United Way gave \$7,500 to Tallassee for repairs to group homes in Tallapoosa County.
- First United Methodist Church of Tallassee gave over \$1,000 in gifts to the residential students for Christmas.
- Community Foundation of Tampa Bay, Florida gave \$1,230 for the Tallassee residential school.
- The Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama awarded \$55,433.09 in program support for Growing Independence Behavioral Services clinic in Anniston.
- Darr Family Foundation granted \$20,000 for The Little Tree Preschool in Anniston.
- Greater Anniston Business and Professional Association: \$1,000 toward Holiday Helping Hearts for the Jacksonville campus
- Honda Manufacturing of Alabama: \$1,000 toward Holiday Helping Hearts for the Jacksonville campus.
- Hayley’s Bar Care Carnival in Mobile raised \$2,421 for Woody’s Song School.
- Ben May Charitable Trust granted \$10,000 to purchase and install a new air conditioning system in the training area of the Mobile campus.
- The Daughters of Charity’s Mission & Ministry Foundation granted \$40,000 to provide support to open the new behavioral clinic and provide ABA services to lower income, Medicaid-eligible children.
- The Blues Tavern Barbecue Cook-Off in Mobile raised \$1,628 for Woody’s Song School.
- A.S. Mitchell Foundation awarded \$2,000 to support the expansion of Woody’s Song School in Mobile.
- The William G. Helis Chapter 310 Order of A.H.E.P.A. granted \$2,000 to Woody’s Song School to support ABA services at the school.
- The Hearin Chandler Foundation gave \$3,000 to support the renovation project at two Learning Tree residences as part of the Today’s Homeowner project in Mobile.
- The Joseph Treadwell Charitable Foundation awarded \$10,000 for the purchase of technology for Woody’s Song School and the Residential School in Mobile.
- The Alabama Power Service Organization’s fishing tournament raised \$3,750 for Woody’s Song School in Mobile.
- The Crampton Trust gave \$5,000 to support the purchase of tablets and software for the Catalyst program in Mobile.
- Willis Towers Watson donated \$3,500 to support the new Growing Independence Behavioral Services clinic in Mobile.

Growing Independence Behavioral Services Clinics Open Across The State *(continued from page 1)*

The clinic locations are:

- 5465 Able Court, Mobile, Al 36693
Clinic Director, Julia Starr, M.S., BCBA, LBA
- 2185 Normandie Drive, Montgomery, AL 36111
Clinical Supervisor, Sarah Bedell, M.S., BCBA, LBA.
(This location enjoys a partnership with Easterseals in their new building.)
- 664 Powers Ave., Anniston, AL, 36205
Clinic Director, Jennifer Wythe, M.S., BCBA, LBA
- 2233 Cahaba Valley Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242
Clinical Supervisors, Krishonna Payne, M.S., BCBA, LBA
and Steven Bedell, M.S., BCBA, LBA



Montgomery Clinic located in Easterseals new building.
An Open House was held in August.

DANNY LIPFORD AND “TODAY’S HOMEOWNER”

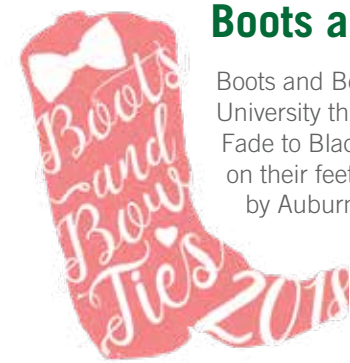
The Learning Tree’s programs were featured on nationally syndicated, “Today’s Homeowner with Danny Lipford.” In celebration of 20 years on the air, Mr. Lipford and his crew took on several community projects. They chose to help The Learning Tree with major repairs on several of the residential program homes in honor of Autism Awareness Month.

Thanks to a grant from Hearin Chandler Foundation and the hard work of the Today’s Homeowner’s crew and friends, the homes received new sod in the front yards and updated kitchens and lighting. Sod was provided courtesy of Woerner Turf. One of the homes received a new kitchen floor, painted cabinets and counter tops. The children, staff and families were thrilled with the results!

The Today’s Homeowner’s crew had done their homework prior to filming and were ready with ideas to make the homes work for the special needs of the kids. They brought puzzle piece ribbons for everyone to wear and inserted autism facts on screen throughout the TV show. Kids from The Learning Tree and Woody’s Song School came out for several days to help with the renovations. They learned to use a leaf blower, power washer, sand cabinets, plant flowers and lay sod. They were also busy working with the cleaning crew.

Our friends Angel Loewen and Michelle McDaniel, with the Autism Society of Alabama, came out and helped with the power tiller, painting and laying sod and treated the team to lunch! We would also like to thank Naman’s Catering and Newk’s Eatery for the delicious lunches. We greatly appreciate Danny and all of our new friends at Today’s Homeowner! The community awareness that the show gave was amazing, but nothing beats the love that you showed our kids.





Boots and Bowties 2018

Boots and Bowtie’s moved to the ALFA Ag Pavilion at Auburn University this year. Entertainment was provided by DJs from Fade to Black Productions. The great music kept the crowd on their feet. Guests enjoyed a sit-down dinner provided by Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center, and featuring the famous sweet tea brined southern fried chicken and yummy chocolate covered strawberries for dessert! Thanks to our sponsors for their generous contributions.

Magnolia sponsors: AES Industries, Neptune Technology Group, Opelika-Auburn Parents.

Cotton Blossom sponsors: ALL For Children, Covington Healthcare, Dr. Doris Hill and family, Jeffcoat-Trant Funeral Home, Patterson and Duke, P.A., Servis First Bank and TPI Publishers, Inc.

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A special thanks to our volunteers: Carmen Rodgers, Steve and Priscilla Hammonds, Dallas Weldon, Brittney Hornsby, Amanda Platt, Leigh Ann Wine, LaKay’s Unique Designs, Cathy Zevac, and Madeline Levin.



Marilyn Hawkins and Kat Ratford from TPI Publications



Brittney Hornsby and Whitney Watson.



Brandon Wilson, Michaela Sanders, Sherry Wilson, Darrell Wilson, Jimmy Duke, P.J. Duke



Tuskegee University Fraternity volunteers



Dallas Weldon



Aces for Autism Gala 2018

Guests went ‘all in’ for The Learning Tree children, at the 7th annual Aces for Autism Gala event. Pediatrics Plus, a presenting sponsor for several years, is a local pediatrician’s office committed to caring for children in the community. We are grateful for their continued support. “Aces” is the largest fundraiser in the northern region in support of The Learning Tree programs in Anniston and Jacksonville. More than \$37,000 was raised through ticket sales, sponsorships, pre-event donations, on-site pledges and auction donations.

The gala was held at the Anniston Meeting Center located in Downtown Anniston. Garfrerick’s Café of Oxford, AL provided the catering. Guests were welcomed with fresh watermelon margaritas. Dinner featured baked lasagna bolognaise, with southern inspired side dishes. The event’s signature dish, cajun shrimp and grits, was also featured, surrounded by a table full of a variety of fresh salads and fruit. Dessert included a wonderfully gooey white chocolate bread pudding.

Fade to Black Productions, an entertainment company out of Columbus, GA, provided the music for the evening. Goodfella’s Gaming delivered once again on another fun filled casino night with their quality dealers and games. Gaming included poker tables, blackjack, roulette, craps, and a new money wheel. A large silent and live auction added to the fun and excitement.

Brian Reaves, a Birmingham magician and mentalist, provided a custom show during the VIP Sponsor Cocktail Hour before the main event. Brian was the 2016 Close-Up Magic Champion, and three-time Birmingham Magician of the Year. He also entertained “close up magic” as the general admission guests arrived. Cheers! And on to 2019!



Brian Reaves Magician

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Chase and Emily Thomas of Pediatrics Plus



Holly Mays, Tiffany Haynes, Bryan Haynes, Ariann Hosford



Pat Murphy and Kim Payne of The Learning Tree



Stan and Ginger Ivey



Jillian Johnson holding a Prince autographed guitar



New Flyer

Lake Martin United Ways “Day of Action” spruced up Dadeville Elementary School.



Pictured L-R: Stephanie Weldon, Jeremy Jeffcoat, Stacey Jeffcoat, Melissa Reynolds (Boys and Girls Club), Ken Cowart and Johnny Payne (Alex City Rescue Squad)



Jacksonville Tornado Impacts Employees

During the darkness of night, March 19, 2018, Jacksonville experienced a mile wide tornado. Leaving in its wake splinters of memories, heaps of debris, wind ravaged homes and massive oak trees tossed about. The silence after the storm was deafening. Jacksonville's Gamecock Country looked like a war zone.

Within minutes of sunrise the next day volunteers appeared by the hundreds, with their chainsaws, tractors, chains, and shovels. Moving from one house to the next, clearing rubble to help residents to safety.

More than 30 Learning Tree employees were impacted by the storm. Some lost only a few windows, while others lost everything. Support for our employees came from all over, including Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, delivering clothing, food, and supplies. Gift cards to local stores were donated for each displaced employee.

Jacksonville will rebuild from that stormy night over the months and years ahead. And, The Learning Tree will continue to thrive in Jacksonville thanks to the generosity of many kind individuals.



Learning Tree representatives attending 2018 Autism Shines gala; From left, Dr. Marc Williams, Dr. Jim Sears, Sheila Sears, Dr. Heather Jones, Drew Jones, Dr. Matthew Busick, and Caroline Busick. Not pictured, Dr. Phyllis Reile

Remembering Lori Cart

February 1, 1981 – June 21, 2018

Lori Cart was never without a smile and hug for the children in her classroom at The Little Tree Preschool in Mobile. "Lori had this light about her, remembers parent Constance Rice. "She always had the biggest and brightest smile on her face. Lori watched over both of my daughters as if they were her own. I never worried about them, I knew that she would shower them with love and praise and keep me updated daily on their achievements." Lori sent photos to parents throughout the day, of something simple, but spectacular in that child's life. Lori made the simple spectacular.

Parent Kimberlee Benya remembers meeting Lori for the first time. "Lori greeted us with her big beautiful smile and told me how excited she was to teach my son. Her presence and personality was infectious. She developed a special bond with Waylon and took her time getting to know him. We texted weekly, if not daily, about all the wonderful things her children were accomplishing in her class. She texted me a picture of Waylon writing his name for the first time all by himself so that I wouldn't miss that precious moment. There are not enough words to express my love and gratitude for the impact she had on Waylon, but my entire family.

Lori was killed in a fatal car accident this summer. Most of her former students have moved on to Kindergarten and beyond. But, Lori's legacy will continue to live on at The Little Tree Preschool. Her motto "When You Can Be Anything, Be Kind" resonates throughout the school. Christy McSpadden, Preschool Director, says it well, "Lori was the type of teacher that everyone hopes their child gets to experience. She loved each child like they were her own and always tried to make things extra special for the children in her room. She worked so hard to help all students overcome their struggles and she celebrated all of their victories, no matter how big or small. Lori has forever left a lasting mark on the lives of many. She will be greatly missed."

Kilborn's Kids

Kilborn's Kids at their summer water party at Woody's Song School and the residential school. The kids were treated to a water slide, pools and water hoses. OnSite Entertainment was at the school for the kids to get out of heat and play video games. They also enjoyed pizza and popsicles. Everyone had a blast! Kilborn's Kids is a scout-type program sponsored by Vincent Kilborn and the Joseph Treadwell Foundation. Thank you, Mr. Kilborn for helping us get our summer off to a great start!





A Night at the Races

A record crowd attended the 6th Annual “A Night at the Races”, sponsored by HPC Pharmacy. Derby hats and bow ties were “costume de rigueur” at the Kentucky Derby-style event, with videoed horse races as a highlight of the evening. More than 200 people gathered at The Pillars of Mobile to enjoy live music by James Patterson and Chip Herrington and delicious hors d’oeuvres by Clark’s Kitchen. Ms. Kelly Finley, with 106.5 Radio, did an outstanding job as emcee for the night. We would like to thank Woody’s Song parent, Ron Cieutat, and Senator Cam Ward for opening the evening with a few words about the impact of The Learning Tree programs and the recent legislation for mandated insurance coverage for autism therapies.

The guests enjoyed a large silent auction featuring original artwork by the students at The Little Tree Preschool and Woody’s Song School. The Magic Memories photo booth and OnSite Entertainment’s video game truck were both big hits again this year. A lively live auction ensued as the guests used their “Derby Dollars” to bid on a gift basket of adult beverages. Thank you to Harper Technology for always making sure the races go off without a hitch!

Our volunteers are critical to the success of our event. Thank you to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make it our most successful event yet. We greatly appreciate Gulf Distributing and United Johnson Brothers for donating the beer and wine for our guests’ enjoyment. Thank you to our Host Committee: J.C. Barker, Wesley and Aeana Carpenter, Ron Cieutat, Randy and Alison Copeland, Nathan and Dana Handmacher, Abe and Audra Harper, Carl and Cecily Harper, Edward and Allison Kendall, Gaylord and Janet Lyon, Carson and Brandy Strickland and Greg and Judy Sykes. \$35,000 was raised to benefit The Learning Tree’s programs in Mobile. This brings the totals of the past years to more than \$100,000. Mark your calendar for Friday, May 10th for the 7th Annual “A Night at the Races!”

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Kelly Finley and J.C. Barker



Pictured Left -Right : J.B. Loper, Brandy and Carson Strickland, Carol Loper



Adrienne and Tim Jones



Senator Cam Ward



Billy and Jessica Wofford



April Shaw



Shaquana Giles and Antonio Birch



Dr. Maureen Baldy and City Councilman John Williams



Cecily and Carl Harper with Terrance James



Night at the Races - Courtyard



Pictured Left - Right: Stephanie Archie LeGrone, Dana Terry



Learning Tree Executive Director Marc Williams, and Assistant to the Executive Director Erin Wofford

Woody’s Song School Car Wash

The students at Woody’s Song School held a car wash to help support some of their summer projects. They worked hard and enjoyed having a reason to play in the water. More than \$600 was raised! The school plans to hold another car wash...keep an eye on The Learning Tree Facebook page for details.



Senior Bowl Players Visit

The Residential School and Woody’s Song School were hosts to some very special visitors. Senior Bowl Players, Ja’Whaun Bentley (Purdue University) Oren Burks (Vanderbilt University) and Harrison Phillips (Sanford University) came by the schools and helped celebrate Mardi Gras with the Conde Cavaliers.

The Conde’s made their annual roll through the school helping everyone get into the Mardi Gras mood. The players enjoyed helping the kids fill their bags with beads, candy and Moon Pies. They even took a few back for themselves. Ja’Whaun, Oren and Harrison made all of our kids feel like superstars! Good luck in the NFL guys!





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Honorable John Williams
Dr. Marc Williams
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Ms. Erin Wofford
Ms. Gray Zimlich
Zoghby's Uniforms

In memory of Mr. Bob Childs
Mrs. Barbara Handmacher

In memory of Mr. Paul Handmacher
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hanchrow
Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Swan

In memory of Ms. Harriet Scheuer Kahn
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In memory of Mr. Paul Moss
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Conner
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Listing reflects donations made January 1, 2018 through August 31, 2018.



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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017

AZALEA CITY GOLF COURSE • MOBILE

**FOR SPONSORSHIP
AND TEAM INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

Teresa Atkins
251-331-2633
tatkins@learning-tree.org

or

Cindy Fulford
251-656-0070
cfulford@voase.org

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