We are “Flying Our New Colors” with a fresh, innovative look. In recognition of our 85th anniversary, the Achievement Center launched a new logo in February 2008. With input from board members and staff, under the guidance from Tungsten Creative Group, a new logo emerged resulting in a colorful kite creation. The kite embodies a more youthful look which exemplifies the soaring successes of many children and young adults who are a part of the Achievement Center family. The star in the center of the kite symbolizes “achievement,” the hallmark of our agency.

Accompanying the new logo is the tag line…“Above and Beyond.” This statement represents how the Achievement Center partners with the families who choose our services. Children and young adults receiving services reach “above and beyond” to achieve their therapeutic goals. Clinicians, support staff and volunteers also go “above and beyond” to ensure high quality therapeutic services and personalized treatment for each child.

I am thankful to each of you for supporting the Achievement Center. I appreciate your belief in our mission to “Maximize the Potential of Children.”

This edition marks the future of the Achiever and signifies the continued journey of the Achievement Center’s 85 years of community programming and services to children with special needs.

We are committed to helping children and young adults reach their goals. I invite you to join our journey. Allow the soft, summer breeze to lift you above and beyond… together we can soar.
2008 Annual Campaign for Children

Dear Achievement Center Friends,

On behalf of the board of directors and myself, I invite you to join the 85th anniversary celebration of the Achievement Center. For 24 years, I have worked as a juvenile counselor with delinquent and dependent kids, ages six to 18 years, and I see the impact positive therapies have on children to improve their self-esteem and independence.

The Annual Campaign for Children is a time when we ask for your support. Your donation will support the programs in the Physical Rehabilitation Department and directly benefit children with physical disabilities. The funding for this department is limited. You can make a difference in helping children and youth attain physical independence for essential life tasks and help a child experience the joy of recreational and peer building activities.

Please join us in contributing to the Achievement Center’s 2008 Annual Campaign for Children. The board of directors is proud to take part in the celebration and has committed 100% participation to the annual campaign. Your donation will help us to continue to go above and beyond to reach the therapeutic needs of the children and youth in our community.

An envelope is enclosed in this newsletter. Please complete and return with your tax-deductible contribution.

Thank you,

Michael E. Butler
Board President

“I believe in children. Every child has the ability to succeed. The Annual Campaign is my way of giving back to the children to help them succeed,” Michael Butler, Board President.
This year marks the Achievement Center’s 85th Anniversary of providing quality therapeutic services and continuing to go above and beyond to meet the needs of children and families in the community.

The agency’s roots can be traced back to 1923 when a group of Rotarians sought to fill a gap in care for children with physical disabilities in need of therapeutic services. The Erie County Crippled Children’s Society was established as orthopedic surgeon, Dr. C. W. Fortune, volunteered his time by examining, diagnosing and treating children free-of-charge.

In keeping with the mission of “maximizing the potential of children,” the Achievement Center currently provides child-centered and family-focused therapeutic services in four division areas: early childhood development, physical rehabilitation, mental/behavioral health, and autism spectrum disorders.

The Achievement Center services approximately 3,500 children and their families annually in Erie County and the region.

“...It’s just really a good feeling that something you were involved with is still working, and working better than you could have conceived,” said Barbara Nitkiewicz who received therapies at the Achievement Center from 1945-1956.
In 1992, the agency discontinued Learning Disability and began Mental Health Services for children. Mental Health Services included Outpatient, Behavioral Health, and Family Based Mental Health (FBMH) services for children and their families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>In 1997, the Achievement Center’s Physical Rehabilitation Program affiliated with the national program Winners on Wheels (W.O.W.). The agency also developed an adaptive sports program and Junior Coach Opportunities.</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>In 2001, the agency brought a nationally renowned summer camp for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder to Erie. The agency also opened a branch office in Jamestown, New York.</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>In 2004, the agency expanded by moving its BHRS Services to the Gideon Ball House adjacent to the main agency on East 6th Street.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>In 2005, the Achievement Center opened a branch office in Warren, PA and began providing Early Intervention and Mental Health Services in Forest and Warren Counties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>In 2007, the agency opened an office in Meadville, PA and expanded its Early Intervention, Mental Health, and Autism Services in Crawford County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>In 2008, the agency celebrated 85 years of providing quality therapeutic services and introduced a new logo and tag line. The agency also introduced the Lake Erie Autism Diagnostic Educational &amp; Research Services (LEADERS) Program in the Autism Division.</td>
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“Liz is four years old. Since receiving services at the Achievement Center, Liz has learned to walk on her own. I bring her here to encourage her to catch up because I believe she can, and everyone at the Achievement Center makes me feel that way,” said Liz’s mother, Dianne Banta.

“The services that our son, Keshon, received at the Achievement Center have helped strengthen our family unit. We appreciate the therapists,” said parents, Kenny Krayeski and Wanda Ricks.
Gold Level Sponsors:
Erie Insurance Group
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WSEE

Silver Level Sponsors:
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Hamot Medical Center
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Northwest Savings Bank
PNC Bank
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Saint Vincent Health System
UPMC Health Plan

Bronze Level Sponsors:
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McGill, Power, Bell & Associates
William T. Spaeder

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Choppy Waters
Community Table
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Geri Cicchetti and Friends
Gohrs Printing Service, Inc.
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Presque Isle Psychiatric Associates (PIPA)
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Strategy Solutions, Inc.
The NW PA Cleft Palate Institute
Tungsten Creative Group
United Way of Erie County
William T. Spaeder and Friends
WQLN

Significant Contributors:
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Mr. Robert and Mrs. Angela Leasure
Bill Page - DJ Services
Peek N’ Peak Resort and Conference Center
Pepsi Bottling Company
Potter Silkscreening
Presque Isle Orthopedic Lab
Scott Enterprises
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Dr. Jack and Mrs. Heidi Utley
Waste Management

Silent Auction Contributors:
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Boothby Inn
Christine Bowen
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Campbell Pottery and Gallery
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Erie Playhouse
Erie SeaWolves
Erie Sports Store
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Glenwood Beer Distributor Inc.
Greenfield Basket Company, Inc.
Gerry Gustafson
Stephanie Hall
Heritage Wine Cellars
Cindy and Bob Hessinger
John Huegel Photography
Natalie Huegel
Joe Roots Grill
JR’s Last Laugh Comedy Club
Kay Jewelers
Tom and Holly Kitchen
Knickerbocker Equipment Company
Stephanie Krayeski
Kuntu Repertory Theatre
Lake Erie Speedway
Mary Lariccia
Laurel Highlands River Tours
Legacy Designs
Lowe’s, West
Linda Mans-Leary
Bebe Marin
Marketplace Grill
Merle Norman Cosmetics
Merry Maids
Mi Scuzi Restaurant
Molly Brannigans Irish Pub and Restaurant
Naturally Yours
Niagara Falls Aquarium
North East Chamber of Commerce
Connie Osiecki
Melinda Ostermann
Mary Beth Payne
Penn Shore Winery and Vineyards
Penn State Erie - The Behrend College
Pittsburgh Steelerers Organization
Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium
Potratz Floral Shop and Greenhouse
Presque Isle Downs & Casino
Pufferbelly Restaurant
Relish
Rock N’ Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
Romolo Chocolates
Sparkling Ponds Winery
Stefanelli’s Candies
Stonehouse Inn
Super Suppers
Tom Baumann Carpetworld Ltd.
Tom Karle and Sons
Waldameer Park and Water World
Kate Walsh
Judy Wear
Wegmans, Peach Street
YMCA of Greater Erie
The Erie Times-News has been studying hard since their defeat to arch nemesis MacDonald, Illig, Jones & Britton at the Achievement Center’s 2007 Erie Trivia Night. Their pursuit of the coveted “Achiever’s Title” has been never-ending, as Erie Times-News has competed year after year for a taste of victory. It has been eight years since their last Trivia Night win.

Kevin Cuneo, public editor for the Erie Times-News, has competed all 17 years of the event. “I get a kick out of seeing emcee “Captain” Dan Geary each year along with our trivia rivals MacDonald, Illig, Jones & Britton. We enjoy being the rowdy team of the night and play to have fun. We don’t take it too seriously,” Cuneo said. Fun was evident as high-fives and glass clinking took place to celebrate each of the team’s correct answers throughout the three rounds of trivia.

Some competitors felt they may have an edge on the raucous team, but the Erie Times-News brought their secret weapon to the 17th Annual Trivia Night. “We broke the gender line this year, bringing Liz Allen, administrative editor, and we are not going back! She was a key performer, we are going to keep her around,” Cuneo said.

Armed with a secret weapon and a strategy, “We bet all of our earned points on the final question, you roll the dice and see what you get,” Cuneo said. The team proved victorious. Congratulations to Erie Times-News on their first place finish at the 17th Annual Erie Trivia Night. Erie Beer Company took second place and High Pressure Equipment had a strong third place finish.

The Achievement Center would like to thank all of our supporters, for helping to raise over $30,000 to support programming for children with physical disabilities. Thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, judges, and Dan Geary for another successful year. A special thanks to our gold level sponsors: Erie Insurance Group, High Pressure Equipment, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Welders Supply Company and WSEE.
Meet the Three Baers

At eight years old, Cameron Baer enjoys the same activities as any second grader. He loves swinging, jumping, and climbing. His favorite place is the playground. Cameron is charming, silly, and friendly. Cameron Baer is a child with autism. In spending time with Barry and Diane Baer, they shared the successes and challenges they have faced as the parents of a child with autism.

Q: What impact has Cameron’s diagnosis had on your family?

A: We began receiving services from the Achievement Center when Cameron was two years old. We didn’t have a formal diagnosis; only that Cameron had a speech delay. We expected that we would get some speech therapy and then we would be done. Then, we got the autism diagnosis and we knew that we were in it for the long haul.

The most profound impact that Cameron’s autism diagnosis has had on us as a family is the lack of free time. Of course the initial diagnosis is devastating! But once you get past the grieving and you get into all of the therapies, the school meetings, the workshops, support group meetings, anything and everything else that you do to insure the best outcome for your child, you find that there is barely enough time to eat and sleep.

Q: What words would you use to describe your son?

A: Charming, Silly, Friendly, Angry, Frustrated, Sad. Days often consist of a cycle of emotions that we all have trouble understanding. Cameron is quick with a smile and loves to tease. He will laugh huge belly laughs when something is funny and will continue with a joke once he realizes that people are laughing.

He loves to show off his newly acquired skill of waving “hello” to people that he meets. He is understandably frustrated when people do not respond appropriately to his requests, usually because they do not fully understand what he wants. He is prone to angry outbursts when the frustration gets too great for him to deal with. He is sad when he knows that he has done something wrong, but can’t always identify what it was.

Q: What difference has the Achievement Center made for Cameron and your family?

A: The Achievement Center has been our source for guidance, information and expertise. Without the expertise of the staff, we would not have been able to provide as comprehensive a plan of therapy for Cameron. The staff builds a plan and all members of the team are involved. As Cameron’s needs change, the plan changes. The staff work together to
make sure that every opportunity and all resources are utilized to achieve success.

Q: Has Cameron reached the goals that were set by your family and his therapists at the Achievement Center?

A: Cameron has met many of the goals that we have created for him; there are many more that are a work in progress. Cameron’s language has improved a great deal, to the point that he can communicate verbally, but we are still working on making that language functional.

His social skills continue to be a challenge for him, but he has been more spontaneous with greeting new people when he meets them, so we know that he is on the right track. That is the big struggle, to make all of his skills functional in the real world, not just the therapy room.

Q: What kinds of therapies have been most beneficial?

A: Speech and occupational therapies have been very beneficial and key components to Cameron’s success. I think the most beneficial has been the mobile therapy and the therapeutic staff support that he receives at school and in the community. The staff support that is available outside of the therapy room is a key component to generalizing those skills within the community. One of the hardest and most time consuming aspects of Cameron’s therapies is to get him to use the skills in everyday life.

Q: How do you feel about the therapists who have worked with Cameron?

A: That is like asking me how I feel about my family, they are like family. Each and every therapist is an integral part of our team, working together to get the most benefit out of the time that we spend together. They instruct us so that we can achieve the most positive outcome in the least amount of time. Our behavior specialists work together to make sure that what is being accomplished at school, at home or in the community is being carried over. The team is constantly looking for ways to reach Cameron, to make his learning process as challenging as possible without moving into frustration with failure.

The addition of the Lake Erie Autism Diagnostic Educational and Research Services (LEADERS) Program to the Achievement Center has made available more expertise in behavior modification specific to individuals with autism. Their knowledge adds a new level of therapy and training for all children and families living on the spectrum.

Q: What have you learned as a family?

A: That our child, your child and all children, typical and not so typical have a huge capacity for learning, but an even greater ability to teach those around them about love, perseverance, tolerance and strength. We’ve learned that there is no single definition for normal. Is the life that the Baer family is leading normal? It’s as normal as we can make it. We have friends and family that we spend time with. We participate to the best of our ability in the community. We try to enlighten those around us about the challenges of disabilities, seen and unseen. Do we succeed… not 100% of the time, but we’ll keep trying.

The Achievement Center would like to thank the Baer family for sharing their story.
At six years old, Seth was having problems with speech development. His vocabulary was very limited. He was also having trouble focusing on activities; toys and books did not hold his attention.

Seth’s mom Terri was concerned that he was not progressing like other children his age. She turned to the Achievement Center for help.

After Seth’s diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), his mom found comfort and resources from the Lake Erie Autism Diagnostic, Educational & Research Services Program (LEADERS) at the Achievement Center.

LEADERS is a program that offers families and professionals access to services that are founded in evidence-based practice. The program specializes in designing services that meet the unique needs of every child, family, or school, regardless of geographic location.

Robert Gulick and Tom Kitchen are the Co-Directors of the Achievement Center’s LEADERS Program. The duo has a combined 35 years of experience in working with children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Gulick and Kitchen are enthusiastic about the LEADERS Program and the positive impact it will have on both families and clinicians. “We meet with team leaders and behavioral specialist consultants once a week at the agency and discuss behavior modification plans, ideas for working with each child, and suggestions for interacting with the families,” Kitchen said.

The program uses research and provides education, information and training to staff to access the best possible methods of intervention for children diagnosed with ASD. “We would like the LEADERS Program to be a one stop resource for the community. We are committed to sharing with families the evidence-based interventions that have resulted in successful outcomes.” Kitchen said.

A component of the LEADERS program is educating graduate level students at Mercyhurst College on behavior analysis and autism. Graduate assistants from Mercyhurst College will also have an internship opportunity at the Achievement Center. The collaboration fosters community partnerships, education and training for future Behavior Specialist Consultants (BSC) and special education teachers.

In addition to the center’s web address at www.achievementctr.org, the LEADERS program has introduced an additional website at www.autismleaders.org. The website will serve as a resource for families like Terri and Seth, along with clinicians, who can access information about ASD. Whether you live in a nearby county, across the state, or in another country, the LEADERS program is here to help.

“LEADERS is important for Mercyhurst College because having an affiliation with a community agency allows our students to link the theory of the course work with the practices of the Achievement Center. What is unique about Bob and Tom is they bring their expertise in our Applied Behavior Analysis program,” said Dr. Phillip J. Belfiore, Dean of Graduate Studies at Mercyhurst College.

Above (Left to Right): Co-Directors, Mr. Robert F. Gulick, MFA, BCBA and Mr. Thomas P. Kitchen, MS, BCBA. Pictured (Right): Dr. Phillip J. Belfiore, Dean of Graduate Studies at Mercyhurst College.
Community Credits

- Ms. Eileen Albaugh donated new books to the Achievement Center.
- Barnes United Methodist Church made a donation to the Warren office.
- Lawrence L. Brown Fund of the Erie Community Foundation gave a generous monetary contribution.
- Memorial contributions were given in memory of Beatrice Owens from Mr. Randy Clemons, Ms. Laura Lewis, and Ms. Kristine Roth.
- Memorial contributions were given in memory of Ms. Beulah L. Smith to the “YES I Can!” client fund from Ms. Mary Dwyer, Mr. Bill Kohler, Ms. Laura Plasczynski, Mr. Mike Priestes, Ms. Peggy Schneider and Mr. Shawn Sledzianowski.
- Erie Otters donated Erie Otter hockey tickets to client families.
- Erie Youth Hockey Association provided ice time to the “Sled Dogs.”
- Erie Zoo donated two 2008 Erie Zoo memberships.
- John P. and Billie R. Grunden Fund of the Erie Community Foundation gave a generous monetary donation.
- Hamot Medical Center provided vouchers for client families to attend an Erie Otters game.
- Sandra Joint donated winter coats.
- Terry and Judy Jones made a generous donation of children’s books.
- JTM Foods, Inc. donated treats for children at the holiday time.
- Mr. Juan Llarena donated children’s toys.
- Mr. Robert and Mrs. Carrie Lowther gave a monetary donation in memory of Ann Kukla.
- The Mellish Family donated a preschool bead set.
- Glenn and Ruth Mengle Foundation provided a grant to the “YES I Can!” client fund.
- The Oljeski Family donated infant toys.
- The Pipes and Drums of the Erepa Grotto made a monetary donation in support of the Physical Rehabilitation Department.
- PNC Grow Up Great program made a donation of a gift basket of children’s videos and books.
- Presque Isle Orthopedic Laboratory donated onesies to the Physical Rehabilitation Department.
- Ms. Donna Roesch donated a set of used furniture.
- Ms. Tammy Rupp donated a soccer ball.
- Mr. Jon Waxham made a monetary donation in memory of Winnie Waxham.
- Louise K. Wells Fund of the Erie Community Foundation gave a generous monetary contribution.
- Ms. Mary Lou Wright donated a box of kinesiotape.

The Achievement Center would like to thank the following for their donation of holiday gifts for clients and their families:

- Crawford County Human Services Early Intervention Coordinators and the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit (IU#5)
- Erie Maennerchor Club’s Children’s Charities
- Kit Jaskiewicz and MaryBeth Grambil
- Mercyhurst College Social Work Club
- Unison Health Plan

The Achievement Center’s therapeutic programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities (C.A.R.F.).

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

In New York, a copy of the latest annual report can be obtained from the organization or from the Office of the Attorney General by writing the Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.
He stood on the sidewalk, gripping the handlebars of his new bike with sweaty palms, his helmet fastened tight on his head, and a look of determination in his eyes, Jacob Yeshion was ready to ride his first two-wheeler. His dad, equally excited and nervous, held the bike saddle and pushed his son. The short ride ended in extreme frustration, yelling and tears.

“I always thought you get on the bike, you go a foot and fall, you get back up and do it all again,” said Jacob’s father, Dr. Ted Yeshion. That was not the case for Jacob. “My wife, Stacy, and I have been trying to teach him to ride for years.” He continued, “The learning process has been frustrating for all of us.” Jacob, who could only ride with training wheels, grew more disappointed as he watched his neighborhood friends ride their two-wheelers.

In Control of the Wheel

About the Bike Program

For five years, the Achievement Center has been offering a bike program for children, ages seven and above, to learn to ride a two-wheeler.

Kathy Schreckengost, physical therapist, was instrumental in designing and implementing the bike program. “Five years ago, we developed the program after seeing a need to help children having difficulty achieving this motor milestone. We found frustrated families with children who weren’t able to get off of their training wheels because of a combination of issues including fear, lack of coordination, low muscle tone, poor balance and/or weakness,” said Kathy.

She continued, “We put together a fun program where children could learn a series of balancing skills to lead to independent bike riding. The children gain confidence on their bikes as they learn to balance, coast and scooter along. Families were excited as their children progressed and delighted when they first rode by themselves.”

The physical and occupational therapists in the Physical Rehabilitation Department conduct the bike program each Spring. The training sessions are held once a week for four weeks. Sessions are open to the public. If you would like more information about the bike program, please contact Laura Plasczynski, Director of Rehabilitation Services, at (814) 459-2755, extension 1148.
Ann Neckers, Senior Occupational Therapist at the Achievement Center, suggested Jacob try the center’s bike program. Ann said, “Jacob had the underlying motor skills and balance, but was unable to ride successfully. Jacob needed to have the bike riding process broken down so he could master a two-wheeler.”

Dr. and Mrs. Yeshion quickly enrolled their son in the bike program. Once a week, for four consecutive weeks, his parents along with physical and occupational therapists in the Achievement Center’s Physical Rehabilitation Department, would help Jacob learn the two-wheel basics: balance, pedaling, turning and safety.

“At our first day of the bike program, the feeling was optimistic skepticism. We were all hoping for the best, but for the past few years, riding a bike has been a difficult task,” said Dr. Yeshion. The very first day, the family braced themselves as they were instructed to remove Jacob’s training wheels. “Jacob didn’t want to give them up, those were like a security blanket for him,” said Dr. Yeshion.

Jacob’s panic grew as his training wheels came off. Even with his family helping him to balance, he was reluctant to get on the bike. The fear of falling was too great. Therapists were quick to reassure Jacob saying, “You are the boss of your bike. You are in control.” The thought of being in charge of his bike helped give Jacob the encouragement he needed to try riding.

By the second week, Jacob’s fear turned to excitement. He began the balancing exercises with confidence. From walking in moon boots, to striding across balance beams, Jacob was eager to try each activity. He was even excited when the group learned to coast on their bikes. His father ran along side as Jacob wobbled, both feet off the ground, coasting without training wheels, through the parking lot. Jacob’s mom, Stacy, cheered from the sidelines.

Dr. and Mrs. Yeshion, watched as their son played bike freeze tag with his new friends. They held their breath as Jacob lost balance and landed palms first on the asphalt, expecting an outburst of yelling and tears. To their surprise, Jacob got up and began riding again, anxious to continue the game. “He’s not focused on the stress of learning to ride a bike; he is focused on the activity. He is learning to ride without realizing it,” said Dr. Yeshion.

Dr. Yeshion continued, “All of the teaching steps are so logical, but I wouldn’t have thought of them. The bike program has been a great experience for all of us, especially Jacob.” By the last week of the bike program, Jacob arrived ready to ride. His parents watched with joy and cheered as their son rode confidently around the parking lot. Dr. Yeshion smiled with pride and said, “It doesn’t get better than that.”

The bike program has given Jacob the tools and confidence to be in control of his own bike. Jacob is no longer a spectator while other children ride their bikes; he now waves to neighbors as he rides. Jacob is part of the pack.
Congratulations to Kathleen McCarthy, Regional Director of Forest/Warren County Services, as she recently completed the inaugural Leadership Warren County program. The intensive 10-month program is offered through the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce with the intent to grow future generations of leaders.

The Warren Chamber selects individuals who have a deep commitment to the Warren community, who have achieved high levels of leadership in their centers of influence, and who are likely to assume greater responsibility in the future.

The program fosters community-based leadership development, community involvement, civic engagement, community-building, cooperation, and collaboration. The program is comprised of five components: Sector Field Studies or Community Awareness Sessions; Retreats; Executive Skills Development; Book and Readings; and Impact Projects.

The Achievement Center would like to recognize Ms. McCarthy for her commitment to the program and the Warren community.

“Most exciting aspect for me was participation in an impact project. A group of six participants met weekly to support the WARREN MAIN STREET Program. The Allegheny Center for the Arts is on its way to becoming a reality!” said Ms. Kathleen McCarthy.

She continues, “I wish to thank the Achievement Center for their support in making this intensive ten months of study a reality. I look forward to being better equipped to affect positive change in Warren County. I feel I better understand the unique forces that make up our community and have acquired the skills to enable me to make a difference.”

Upcoming Events

Annual Luncheon

The Achievement Center’s 2008 Annual Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at noon at the Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center, 7792 Peach Street, Erie. As the Achievement Center celebrates 85 years, it is important to recognize those who are dedicated to going above and beyond to maximize the potential of children. The agency’s annual luncheon provides a forum to express thanks and appreciation to staff, volunteers and community members. Please join us at the public event.

Trail of Treats

Each year in October, thousands of masked children gather for the hunt of goodies at Trail of Treats events. Check out the upcoming dates, times and locations at www.achievementctr.org.

Fond Remembrance

In Memory of John A. “Jack” Tirak Jr.

Great sorrow was felt in the halls of the Achievement Center as news regarding Jack Tirak’s passing was shared with staff. John A. “Jack” Tirak, Jr. served on the board of directors from 1988 – 2003. During his tenure, he was instrumental in the agency name changing from the Erie County Crippled Children’s Society to the Achievement Center, as well as a revised agency logo. He served on the board in many capacities and was the Board President from 1995-1997.

Jack was very active in Erie County and had a commitment and spirit to help families and children throughout the community. He will be deeply missed.
As a graduate student at the State University of New York at Fredonia (SUNY), Christina Myers sat attentively listening to the speakers visiting her class. She took notes as Natalie Huegel, Senior Speech Language Pathologist of the Achievement Center, presented to the students.

Myers was impressed with Natalie’s experience and knowledge; so much so, that she asked to observe her in the field. After spending time with Huegel, Myers was hooked. “I always knew I wanted to work with children and pursue a career which would enable me to make a difference in their lives,” Myers said. She was hired at the Achievement Center as a Speech Language Pathologist in Chautauqua County, New York.

One year later, Myers stood confidently in front of 28 students who sat attentively listening, pen in hand, ready to take notes. As a respected Speech Language Pathologist, Myers was recently given the opportunity to present to graduate students at her alma mater.

“I was able to speak with a unique perspective that students could relate to,” Myers said. She spoke to students candidly about professional issues, including the rewards and challenges of the field. Myers offered advice for working with parents and answered clinical questions.

Christina Myers enjoyed the experience of traveling full-circle from graduate school to the professional world and hopes to keep educating her peers.

The Achievement Center’s Meadville Office recently held an open house at 18257 Industrial Drive, Meadville, PA, 16335. The evening was an opportunity for the Crawford County community to learn about the services available through the Achievement Center.

“We have a solid and gifted group of clinicians and therapists in Crawford County. The fact that we have been invited into this county to deliver services speaks volumes about the Achievement Center’s reputation and commitment to children and families,” said Michele Johnston, Regional Director of Crawford County Services.

Many joined in the celebration including staff, board members, state representatives, local service providers and community members. “We were so pleased to have Representative Michelle Brooks join us for the ribbon cutting ceremony. She is very knowledgeable, caring, and supportive in her efforts to help children in this county,” Michele said.

The Achievement Center provides Early Childhood, Mental/Behavioral Health and Autism Spectrum Disorder Services in Crawford County.
Physical Rehabilitation/Recreation Services - Erie
- Therapy Services - PT, OT, Speech/Language, Recreation Therapy
- The Achievers’ Club - Community Recreation
- W.O.W. (Winners On Wheels)
- Family Program
- Adapted Sports

Early Childhood Services
- Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to Three) - Erie, Forest, Warren, Crawford, and Chautauqua Counties
- Early Intervention and Related Services (Preschool Ages 3-5 years) - Erie and Chautauqua Counties
- OCY Assessment and Intervention - Erie
- CYS Assessment, Intervention and Therapeutic Play - Crawford County
- School-based OT Services - Chautauqua
- Universal Pre-K and Preschool - Chautauqua

Mental Health Services
- Children’s Outpatient Mental Health - Erie
- Family Based Mental Health - Erie and Crawford Counties
- Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services (BHRS) - Erie, Crawford, Forest, and Warren Counties
- ADHD Summer Treatment Programs (STP) - Erie Region

Autism Spectrum Disorder Services
- LEADERS Program - Erie, Forest, Warren, Crawford, and Chautauqua Counties
- Inclusion Summer Autism Program - Erie Region

Achievement Center Offices:

**Erie:** 814-459-2755
- 101 East 6th Street, Erie, PA 16507
- 135 East 6th Street, Erie, PA 16501
- 150 East 8th Street, Erie, PA 16507

**Meadville:** 814-724-1333
- 18257 Industrial Drive, Meadville, PA 16335

**Warren:** 814-726-4975
- 414 Market Street, Warren, PA 16365

**Jamestown:** 716-488-2755
- 413 North Main Street, Jamestown, NY 14701

**Findley Lake:** 716-769-7541
- 2883 North Road, Findley Lake, NY 14736

**Need More Information?**
Call Toll Free at 1-888-821-3110 or visit [www.achievementctr.org](http://www.achievementctr.org)

*The Achiever is a publication featuring Achievement Center news and information. Questions or comments can be directed to Marlia Coates, Director of Resource Development, at 814-459-2755, extension 1115 or 1-888-821-3110.*