



a chance to grow

Growing Times April 2023



Promoting the maximum development of the whole child and adult through innovative, individualized and comprehensive brain-centered programs and services.

The Best Kept Secret

Hadley is a shy but sweet teenager who loves her family, friends and especially her dog, Buddy. From the beginning, school hasn't come easy to her. Her parents first noticed something was amiss in second grade when they'd try to do homework with her and she'd cry and beg not to do it. Her writing looked more like a toddler's handwriting and she couldn't seem to stay focused on the material. Her parents were worried – they knew she was smart, yet she struggled in virtually every subject in school, especially reading and math. They were determined to get her the help she needed and began searching for answers. A full neurological evaluation yielded diagnoses of ADHD and Dyslexia.



Hadley, 13

Like countless parents before them, they started on a long journey to find treatments that could help her. They tried everything from Orton-Gillingham tutoring (curriculum tailored for Dyslexics), math tutoring, special help at school, diet changes, medications and more. Nothing changed.

By 5th grade, with Hadley showing no signs of improvement despite all the interventions, her parents knew they had to try something different. A more thorough neurological test was done, as well as vision and hearing assessments, but the results yielded the same diagnoses of ADHD & Dyslexia, along with poor working memory and slow auditory processing. Hadley's struggles continued.

In 7th grade, her parents made the difficult decision to pull her from the school she knew and send her to a private school that specialized in students with learning challenges. But after two years, they hadn't seen much progress. Says her mother, Ali: "A lot of people told us that this school was going to change her life, but it hasn't."

"At that point, we'd tried everything with very little improvement," said Ali. "I had an epiphany that something had to be off in her brain that needs to be fixed at a base level. It felt as if her neurons weren't firing, pathways...Continued on pg. 2

HAPPY

**OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY MONTH**

APRIL

EMBRACING CHALLENGES. ENHANCING LIVES.

April is OT Appreciation Month!

We are so grateful for all the amazing, life-changing work that our OTs do. Each and every day they help their clients gain independence to reach their full potential. Thank you to all the OTs for your dedicated service!

If you or your child want to show your appreciation, check out the activities by the elevator (1st floor) for your chance to share what your OT means to you! We will share your submission with your OT and feature it on our lobby TV!

were blocked. I couldn't shake this belief that we had to find the root cause. Otherwise, we will just keep spinning our wheels, losing thousands of dollars in the process."

Not knowing what else to do, Ali turned to Google. "As I went down the Dr. Google rabbit hole, I learned about primitive reflex integration, something I'd never even heard of but sounded like it could be causing some of Hadley's challenges. Eventually I came across A Chance To Grow." She immediately emailed Kelly Pittman, ACTG's Director of Neurotechnology services, and during their first discussion, she knew that she was on the right track. "Talking to Kelly that first time was so refreshing because she totally understood our plight, having dealt with this type of stuff both as a parent and professionally."

As she learned more about ACTG's clinical services, Ali was shocked and disappointed that she'd never heard of the services that ACTG offers. "The holistic, natural, brain-based therapy made total sense to me. For the first time ever, I knew that we'd found a better path."

First, Hadley began neurofeedback with Kelly to help her brain self-regulate more efficiently. "It's very common for people to get stuck in a stress response on a daily basis," says Kelly. "This can show up in a child's behavior as "hypo" or "hyper," either shut down or over-aroused. Neurofeedback addresses this, often improving social & emotional regulation along with academic skills."

Next up is Neuro Integrative therapy, an approach developed at ACTG that combines several interventions that collectively promote brain growth and social, physical and emotional development through purposeful movement. The goal is to establish efficient neurological connections between the brain and the systems of the body to improve higher-level functioning.

Kelly also recommended that Hadley undergo functional auditory & vision screenings. These differ from the routine screenings where, when a child passes it's assumed that their hearing or vision is fine. But functional problems with eyes and ears that can seriously impede the ability to learn are not picked up by routine screenings. Says Ali, "I was floored to learn that vision played into learning as much as it does. We knew Hadley could read, but she still couldn't comprehend. Now I know. Learning is 80% visual and if the eyes are misaligned or not tracking correctly, it can often be mistaken for ADHD and Dyslexia." Hadley had a functional eye screening and sure enough, ACTG's testing found her eyes were a big part of her challenges. Due to misaligned eyes, she'd skip words which heavily

**Have a loved one struggling to learn?
Discover how ACTG can help!
Call (612) 789-1236 to schedule an exam!**

affected her comprehension. "As ACTG explained to me, she was having to work so hard just to stay aligned in reading words and lines, her brain wasn't able to comprehend what she was reading. Hence, the enormous academic struggles. There is even speculation that Dyslexia might be a misdiagnosis all together."

Hadley was also diagnosed with an auditory processing disorder, which affects the ability to understand speech. Someone with APD might be able to hear well, but the auditory input is not correctly interpreted by the brain.

While she and her family are so happy to finally have answers that they believe in, they also know that it's going to be a long process. "With multiple findings of what's causing the learning issues, it's going to take time to re-train the brain and fix all of this. But at least we have a path, we have a plan. And for the first time, one that I actually believe could turn Hadley's life around once and for all."

To say she and her husband are thrilled to find A Chance To Grow is an understatement. "I was at a point where I was about to give up, just accept it and say, this is just how it is, but I'm so glad I didn't give up, even though I wanted to. If I had given up, I wouldn't have ever found A Chance to Grow."

Although happy that she finally has answers that make sense, she wonders why it took her so long to find ACTG. "Never once in all of these years did a doctor say anything about brain-based therapies," Ali says, the doctors just recommended medication. "I don't understand why the medical community couldn't or wouldn't tell me about these other therapies and methods." Hadley is 13 now, and if Ali and her husband had known about ACTG and their brain-based approach years ago, it might have changed the trajectory of her life.

Now Ali wants to make sure that people who have neuro-diverse family members are aware of it. "I hope anyone who is on their own neuro-diverse struggle finds ACTG. It's the best-kept secret and I want everyone to know about it. They truly want to help Hadley reach her full potential and I'm confident we're in the right spot now, but even more than confident, I am so, so grateful."

Summer 2023 S.M.A.R.T. Workshops Are Here!

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We are excited to announce our upcoming schedule of S.M.A.R.T. and S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K Workshop dates this summer (and beyond) at A Chance To Grow! If you are an educator working with Pre-K - 3rd graders, this is the program for YOU! Registration is now open for all workshops. Visit ACTG.org/workshops to sign up!

S.M.A.R.T. Workshops

- June 27-29, 2023
- July 18-20, 2023
- October 24-26, 2023
- February 27-29, 2024

S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K Workshops

- June 20-22, 2023
- July 11-13, 2023
- November 7-9, 2023
- March 5-7, 2024



All workshops will be held at A Chance To Grow in Minneapolis, MN unless otherwise noted. Register two weeks in advance and save \$25 on your registration fee. Register today and secure your spot!

Advanced-Brain Summer Intensives

Take advantage of summer break and complete our 20-session Advanced-Brain Summer Intensive in 6-10 weeks! Combining in-clinic Neurofeedback with optional at-home Audio-Visual Entrainment, this intensive allows you to train up to 3 times per week with flexible scheduling to see positive results faster! If you or a loved one struggles with a lack of focus, sleep issues, emotional instability, inability to calm, or brain fog, then this intensive may be a good fit. Call (612) 789-1236 to schedule a free consultation and learn more about the program!



Summer Neuro Integrative Intensives also available! This intensive combines several interventions that collectively promote brain growth and development through purposeful movement. By establishing more efficient neurological connections between the brain and body, this intensive can improve higher-level functioning as well as physical and emotional independence. Complete a program inquiry today by visiting ACTG.org/summer-programs.

Vision Clinic and OptomEYES Vision Therapy Have a New Home!

A Chance To Grow's Vision Services have moved offices in our building, just down the hall to suite 220. The new space provides more room for vision therapy activities, optometric equipment, eyeglass frames and offices. Additionally, the new space will allow us to see even more clients! Call us today at (612) 789-1236 to schedule an eye exam and come see it for yourself! Or, you may visit our new Vision Clinic webpage at ACTG.org/visionclinic to take a video tour.

MNRI Courses at ACTG Begin this Month!

A Chance To Grow is hosting 2 Masgutova Neurosensorimotor Reflex Integration (MNRI) courses this spring. The first course, titled *Dynamic and Postural Reflex Integration*, runs from April 21-24, 2023 and is led by Trina Deiss. The course focuses on the importance of primary motor reflex pattern maturation. The cost for the course is \$756.

The second course, titled *Proprioceptive and Cognitive Integration*, runs from May 19-21, 2023, and is led by Theresa Fischer. In this course, participants explore links between the proprioceptive and cognitive systems. The cost for the course is \$576. To learn more or register, visit www.masgutovamethod.com/events. For all other questions, please call (612) 706-5553.



28th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference - April 26-28

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A Chance To Grow is excited to be sponsoring & exhibiting at the **28th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference** at the Marriot Minneapolis Airport Hotel in Bloomington. The event runs April 26-28 and will have keynote speakers and breakout sessions featuring experts, educators, caregivers, parents and support professionals highlighting ways to connect, collaborate, educate and advocate for the Autism community. Registration is still open. For more information or to sign up for the conference, please visit the Autism Society of Minnesota's website at <https://ausm.org/events/state-autism-conference/>.



Save the Date for the 2023 Race for the Children!

The **32nd Running of the Race for the Children** event will be held on Sunday, August 20, 2023 at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, MN. Event details, sponsorship, auction donation and registration information can now be found at ACTG.org/raceforthechildren. Proceeds from the event support the essential programs and services of A Chance To Grow. Contact us at (612) 789-1236 to learn more or to get involved!



Turnquist Awarded Revitalization Grant

The Turnquist Child Enrichment Center has been awarded a Facilities Revitalization Grant from First Children's Finance and the Minnesota Department of Human Services! The \$15,000 grant will help us make our child care space safer and more welcoming for our littlest clients and their families. Thank you to First Children's Finance and Minnesota DHS. We are very grateful for your support!



Garden of Hope Launches July 1

ACTG is launching a new fundraising initiative, called *The Garden of Hope*, for those who want to provide ongoing support. You can ensure we have the resources to sustain operations and continue our legacy of innovation by making small monthly donations. Enrollment opens on July 1, 2023, and members receive special perks! Details can be found on our website at ACTG.org/gardenofhope.



Employment Openings

A Chance To Grow is hiring! Our Clinical Services is seeking a FT Speech-Language Pathologist; our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center is seeking a FT Infant Assistant Teacher/Aide; and our development team is seeking a summer intern to help with events! To learn more about each position, or to apply, please visit ACTG.org/employment.

We need you! Support A Chance To Grow's Essential Programs and Services!

Visit ACTG.org, click on the "Donate" tab on the homepage and fill out the form. Your contribution makes a difference in the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, developmental delays and brain injuries. All donations are tax-deductible.

View our newsletter online! Visit ACTG.org and subscribe!

Equal Employment Opportunity

A Chance To Grow provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants.

Employment is based upon capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, genetic information, service in the military or any other protected characteristic as established by law. This Equal Employment Opportunity policy applies to all policies & procedures relating to recruitment & hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, training and all other conditions of employment.



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