

Parent

March 2012

STOP NEEDLESS ARGUMENTS AND BECOME CONFLICT-WISE

{Page 10}

EMBRACING CULTURAL HERITAGE

{Page 16}

TAX TIPS

{Page 12}

The Camp issue

Explore camps of all kinds!
Special needs • Traditional • Specialty

Camp resource listings
{Page 54}

OUR BIGGEST OUT & ABOUT EVER!
{Page 36}



The power of movement

By Michelle Bruch

At a Northeast Minneapolis day camp, 10-year-old kids with autism navigate an unusual obstacle course.

They walk a balance beam, hang on monkey bars, and alligator-crawl across mats. These exercises aren't just for fun—all of them are designed to stimulate the type of brain activity needed in academics.

The nonprofit A Chance To Grow (actg.org) was founded in 1982, and it's starting to reach out to the community.

"[We want] the community to come out to see the program, see the kids, talk to the parents, and realize that this is in their backyard," says Amy Deden, event and workshop coordinator. "People don't know that we're here."

Many of the clients have Down Syndrome, autism, or attention deficit disorder, although the center serves any child. In addition to exercise, the clinic offers therapies that hook kids up to video games and teaches them to focus their brain activity. Other therapies help kids who see double images or have trouble hearing certain pitches.

The staff has spent the past year reaching out in new ways. They recently partnered with a Northeast yoga teacher to teach classes at the camp. They're also partnering with clubs like the Lions and Exchange Club to host neighborhood picnics and develop scholarships. And they're dreaming up ideas for after-school programs as well as trips that would teach adolescents how to

use local grocery stores.

"We have such great community people here," says occupational therapist Julie Neumann. "People love Northeast. They believe in it and they fight for it, and they fight for their programs."

Making time for moving

A Chance To Grow is more than a health clinic. It runs a daycare center, and it provides teacher workshops across →

The exercises at A Chance to Grow help children make strides in school.
PHOTO BY
LEANN CROWE



**Summer
Academic Programs
for grades 4-12**

Minnesota Institute
FOR TALENTED YOUTH
at Macalester College in St. Paul

MITYcurious?
www.mity.org
651-696-6590



PHOTO BY LEANN CROWE

At A Chance to Grow, children use movement to improve their learning ability in school.

**More activities than your
camper can handle!**

Archery • Arts & Crafts • Camp Craft
Canoeing • Climbing • Drama • Fencing
Fishing • Mountain Biking • Nature Studies
Paddle Mania • Paintball • Riflery
Running Clinic • Balling • Sail Racing
Shop • Slingshots • Swimming
Team Sports • Teams Course • Tennis
Trap Shooting • Trips • Waterskiing
Weight Training • Windsurfing



campfoley.com 218.543.6161

Youth Performance Company

**Act.
Sing.
Dance.**

Theatre workshops
for grades K-12

youthperformance
CO.

612.623.9180 x102
youthperformanceco.org

**School Chess Association
Summer Chess Day Camp**

- Professional educators
- All levels of chess instruction
- Two overnights – lunch & snacks included
- Includes: swimming, soccer, tennis, roller skating, bowling, tubing, sign language, ice skating, fishing, drama and role playing games

8AM-5PM Mon-Thurs • Full Time \$240 a week

WEEKS: June 25-28, July 9-12, July 16-19,
July 23-26, July 30-Aug 2, Aug 6-9, Aug 13-16

St. Louis Park Recreation Center
763-593-1168 www.schoolchess.org

the country. The agency has gained national recognition for its “S.M.A.R.T.” (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) program, which encourages teachers to take breaks for exercise in the classroom. Movement is vital for kids to focus—it “gets the wiggles out,” Neumann says.

After 80 hours of exercises like those mentioned above, children on average make a six-month reading gain, according to the agency. Today, 300 schools across the country use the S.M.A.R.T. strategy, and this past summer, staff conducted teacher workshops in Delaware, Tennessee, and Michigan.

Shari, grandmother to 16-year-old Luke, says that in younger grades, Luke would spend his classroom hours in a daze—he would love nothing more than to simply sit in his room and be quiet, she says. But all of the camp’s emphasis on movement has made a change. Now, Luke wants to go to the gym and play basketball.

“He’s grounded; he’s aware,” she says. “New, wonderful, expansive things keep happening to Luke.”

For kids with developmental disabilities, a simple exercise like walking on a balance beam helps them develop balance and spatial awareness, which are skills they need to simply sit still in a classroom or read from left to right. Other exercises, like crossing the monkey bars, force a child’s eyes to work together and fuse each eyeball’s image into one. That’s an important skill for reading.

“We get to the root level—the basics of movement—and build up from there,” Neumann says.

The summer day camp “Boost Up Plus” spends three intensive weeks on fun exercises and neurotechnology therapies. The program is filled to capacity, and it draws people from across the metro and even attracted a family from Canada last year.

“I spent many, many hours researching places all over the world, so it just seemed like the best of everything,” says Cheryl, a visitor from Canada whose 11-year-old daughter Danielle has severe speech delays. “Anything I have researched, this combines it all.”

Another mother, Kelly, says she appreciates the one-stop-shop for her son, Joe, who is eight years old and has Down Syndrome.

“You do so much driving to therapies and doctors; it’s so scattered,” Kelly says. She tried the Boost Up Plus camp last summer to help Joe’s speech delays and reflexes.

“I saw huge differences from before and after,” she says. “His speech has come further in the last nine months than I’ve seen it come in eight years.”

Kelly also takes advantage of the neurotechnology available. She uses Audio Visual Entrainment (AVE) sunglasses to help Joe relax and go to sleep at night. “He usually sacks right out.”

The sunglasses flash lights that mimic the sensation of sitting by a campfire and are hugely popular at A Chance To Grow. Staff has trained 46 Minnesota schools on how to use them, and they have sold 600 machines to patients since 2001.

“For centuries, people have looked at how flickering lights affect the body,” says Becky Aish, director of neurotechnology services. “Scientists found that watching a candle flame could calm hysteria for some people.”

The pulsing lights match brainwave patterns that can help someone relax (similar to the light a television emits), or stimulate neurons for academic success. At the same time, a pair of headphones plays music with heartbeats and pulses that help brainwaves get into a certain groove. Olympic athletes and even football teams have used the technology to gear up for sports events.

"I used one to get through my master's program," Neumann says. "And for migraines."

Fight-or-flight

Children also try a therapy called EEG Neurofeedback. Electrodes placed on their heads measure brain activity while they watch a dolphin jump in the water, or a plane flying in the sky. If they become distracted, anxious or tired, their brainwaves trigger the game to stop moving. Aish says the goal here is to help children relax and unconsciously teach their brains to rid itself of foggy, unfocused brain activity. Games like this can target the brain state needed for yoga or meditation.

"So many of our kids are in fight-or-flight mode all the time," Aish says. "We want them to relax and de-stress their bodies. ... We're teaching the brain how to appropriately work."

Another service at the clinic tests for auditory processing delays. Some children have trouble with left-ear dominance, a condition where sounds can take longer for the brain to process. Other kids are obsessed with low-frequency noises like running fans or background voices—they tend to blur higher frequencies, like a female teacher's voice. The clinic creates individualized CDs for children to listen to for 10 minutes a day. The CDs might help them become right-ear dominant, or tune into higher frequencies like birds chirping.

All of the neurotechnology services are available at the summer day camps. Kelly says it's an inexpensive way to take advantage of the costly therapies. This past summer, Kelly even enrolled her six-year-old Jessica, who is a typically-developing child—she thought it might help her daughter's carsickness.

"It's great for any kid," Kelly says. "And she's loving it." •

WHOWHATWHENMNOWHEREWHYHOWMN



Summer Day Camps

Minnesota Historical Society Sites & Museums

Bring your campers to the Minnesota Historical Society's summer day camps. They'll have a great time and learn about our state's history, too, with different programs designed to meet different interests. Register online at www.mnhs.org/summercamps. SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS!

M Minnesota Historical Society

Premier Partners: **Xcel Energy** EXPLORING Minnesota

Your Kids Will Flip For PLAYWORKS Summer Camp 2012

June 11 - August 31

For kids entering 1st - 6th grade in the fall of 2012!

Monday - Friday 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. • Saturday & Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Full-time or Part-time

Enroll by March 31, 2012 and receive FREE enrollment. (\$65 value).

Exciting arts and crafts, science and nature, outdoor games and more!
Fun Field trips to beaches, parks, pools, amusement parks, and more!

Contact Susan Perez, School Age Manager at susan.perez@playworksfun.com or call 952-496-6811

Register Today!

www.playworksfun.com

Owned and Operated by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community




Your child is a natural...



The Yamaha Music Education System features musical activities that tap into your child's natural learning ability.

♪ Ear Training ♪ Singing ♪ Playing ♪ Composing

Basic Musicianship & Keyboard Classes for children 3^{1/2} & up
Individual lessons offered in piano, voice, percussion, strings & more

CHILDREN'S YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL

Celebrating Over 35 Musical Years in Minnesota!

Visit our website for **FREE PREVIEW CLASS DATES** www.cyms.ws

yamahamusic@cyms.ws
612-339-2255

Known Worldwide
Classes offered in 40 countries

Schools in Edina & Roseville

CYMS Edina:
Edina Community Center
5701 Normandale Rd
Edina

CYMS Roseville:
Hamline Center
2819 Hamline Ave N
Roseville

