



SPECIAL TIMES

Community Therapeutic Day School

187 Spring Street, Lexington, MA 02421 781/861-7081

2002 Volume 13 #2

**Our teachers share meaningful relationships with the children and their families.
This newsletter honors this special connection.**



“My teachers help me read! They are special because they make me feel happy by hugging me and helping me with my words.” *Michela*



“I like my teachers because they are nice and fair and kind.”

Rafael



“I like my teachers because they help me with my worries.”

Jackson

“My teachers are special because they hold me and help me talk about my feelings. They also laugh, play and teach me new things. They make me feel good.”

Douglas



“My teachers are special. What they do for me is that they help me when I have big feelings. They really love me.”

Bobby

A TRIBUTE TO OUR DAUGHTER'S TEACHER

All of us who are parents of children with special needs know how it feels when you first realize that your child has a disability, and that her issues will seriously affect her ability to grow, learn, and enjoy life the same way as most children. Those of us for whom accommodations and interventions are not sufficient for our children to remain in their local neighborhood school know another kind of pain.

Emma's last day in her public school classroom, was one of the hardest of MY life. . . watching her after each subject dutifully putting her school work folders back into the slots that said "Emma" and knowing they'd never be used again. . . saying good-bye to the friends that it had taken her three years to make. Making matters much, much worse was that we had nowhere to go. By default, after our local public school felt they couldn't provide for her and after failing to locate a suitable alternative, we took her home, my wife began home-schooling, and we looked for every opportunity to connect outside of school with other children. My wife did a great job, but it was still very hard for all of us. We felt very alone.

After several months, into this bleak landscape stepped the Community Therapeutic Day School (CTDS) in Lexington. They had evaluated Emma earlier in the year but had no room for her. They did, however, assist us in finding a tutor and someone from their staff to supervise her home program, which was a big help to us. We still longed for Emma to have a school to call her own again.

Last spring, CTDS informed us that they would have a place for Emma, and hope returned. Emma started there last



June. They slowly worked her into a classroom, starting with 1:1 support and frequent contact with the CTDS teacher who has been supervising the home program and who has become a friend to Emma. We started to feel like we belonged.

This school year, she's been in a classroom staffed with two wonderful teachers. It is my great honor to have nominated and now to announce Ms. Joan Brégy as the recipient of an Appreciation Award, presented by the Parent Advisory Council of our local public school to teachers who have made a significant contribution. This is a woman who has worked in the field for over 20 years and is used to all manner of difficulties. It's safe to say that Emma has not been easy, and I think Joan would agree that she's never encountered a child quite like her. Through it all, Joan has worked diligently through observation and in consultation with other professionals both within and outside the school to learn how best to teach Emma. She is always suggesting ideas, and in turn, is always willing to try suggestions that we offer. It's a wonderful collaborative environment where we really feel that everyone is working together to do what's best for Emma. Beyond Joan's exceptional efforts in teaching are the qualities she displays in the process – genuine concern, energy, patience, humor, and grace. And she's not there for the children alone, she's there for all of us – when Emma had a particularly difficult day at school last week, which had me in tears, Joan called us at home that night to check on us.

School – life, in fact – is still difficult for Emma, and we know that she will never be "cured." She is who she is, and we need to do everything we can to help her adjust to the world – and, at times, to help the world to adjust to her – so that she can grow up to be happy. That's our #1 mission. And thanks to Joan Brégy and the staff at CTDS, we feel for the first time like that's a realistic goal.

Alan Bloom

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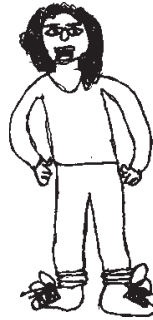
“They may forget what you said. But they never forget how you made them feel.”

Carl Breuchner

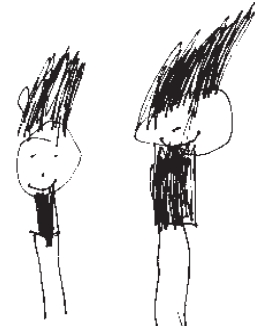
Portraits of the teachers by CTDS children



CORINNE



OLIVIA



MARA

KATE



JOAN

“Amy is so sweet and nice and special. She makes learning fun. She knows lots of stuff about Mesopotamia. She is fun and can be silly. She makes us laugh. She’s good at teaching reading. She chooses great and interesting books for us to read and she doesn’t give too much homework. She’s not too strict. When she uses her big voice it helps us to behave. She helps kids with their sad feelings. She’s a happy teacher and she makes us feel happy. She knows a lot about fashion. She is stylish. She is beautiful! She looks just like Cinderella.”

Amy, Joan, Kristie, Maria & Lindsay’s Class



AMY



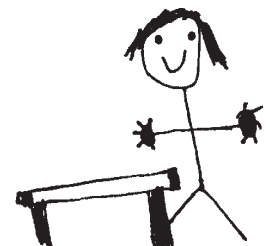
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