Development ACTIVITIES

The Orthogenic School and its students have been the grateful beneficiaries of both individual and corporate gift giving over the years, particularly around the holiday season. Several recent expressions of generosity need mentioning.

- Orthogenic School Board member John Schmidt, CPA and FERS Business Services, Inc. recently delivered desks, shelves and cabinets to the school. The furniture will be used in the dormitory “quiet rooms” where students read, study, listen to music and relax after their academic and extracurricular activities.

- The University of Chicago Hospitals will be providing gifts for the Orthogenic School’s “Holiday Gifts for Children” program. This program benefits students who will remain at the Orthogenic School during the holidays.

- Also, the Board of Directors at the Orthogenic School will provide age and interest appropriate books for students at the “O” School for the Christmas Holiday Season party in December.

The Orthogenic School is currently in need of couches and love seats for the dormitory and a piano for its music education program. Anyone interested in assisting with these needs or in making a financial contribution to the Orthogenic School may contact Stephen Luce, Ph.D., Executive Director at (773) 702-1203, or e-mail at: sluce@midway.uchicago.edu.

Please know that your generosity is deeply appreciated by all!
BRAIN RESEARCHERS WIN NOBEL

The 2000 Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to three neuroscientists for their groundbreaking research on the brain. Eric R. Kandel, M.D., of Columbia University and Paul Greengard, Ph.D., from Rockefeller University, shared the award with Arvid Carlsson, M.D., from the University of Goteborg, Sweden. The Nobel Assembly said that the three neuroscientists “have made pioneering discoveries concerning one type of signal transduction between nerve cells. These discoveries have been crucial for an understanding of the normal function of the brain and how disturbances in this signal can give rise to neurological and psychiatric diseases.”

MANY CHILDREN IN SELF-CARE

A recent study conducted by the Urban Institute indicates that up to 4.4 million 6-12 year olds care for themselves before and after school while their parents are working. The authors’ findings indicate that:

- many of these children are potentially at risk because they lack supervision; &
- children who are left alone are at a greater risk of physical injury and psychological and emotional harm.

For more information on this study visit www.urban.org.

FROM THE
Director’s Desk

The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recently held its annual conference in New York. I had the opportunity to participate and discuss some of the current trends in the field with other professionals. We also set up a booth showcasing our school and its dedicated staff. Up to 150 visitors a day, from all over the U.S. and several foreign countries, stopped by to ask questions, view our PowerPoint presentation and receive literature on our program. Visitors to our booth appreciated our strong academic focus, affiliation with the University of Chicago, our school’s urban setting and excellent results with children (83% of our students, over the past ten years, have been placed in less restrictive environments).

Our feature article underscores the talented professional staff at the Orthogenic School. The interview with Julie Feldkamp will provide you with an insight into the inner workings of our program. She is a marvelous example of the employee/student model that benefits from our school’s affiliation with the University of Chicago and makes such a vital contribution to the positive outcomes of our students.

On behalf of all of us at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, we wish you a happy holiday season and best wishes for the New Year!

Stephen C. Luce, Ph.D.
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Julie Feldkamp is typical of the staff at the Orthogenic School. By day, she is a hardworking graduate student in the University of Chicago’s Graduate School of Social Service Administration. By night, she is the Night Supervisor at the Orthogenic School, overseeing the night staff that care for the forty young people living in the residential facility. She exemplifies the employee/student that has been so successful at the “O” School and has enriched both students and faculty with their creativity and dedication to human services. Julie recently reflected on her responsibilities as the Night Supervisor and her calling to the field of social services.

Q: What are your primary responsibilities as the Night Supervisor at the Orthogenic School?

A: I perform the scheduling, training, recruitment and overall supervision of the night staff. I also have duties as a night counselor which includes reading behavioral notes from the day counselors on each child; making multiple bed checks to closely monitor the children’s behavior and to make sure everyone is safe and in bed; and caring for children who are not feeling well. The morning responsibilities include: waking children up for their showers; making sure appropriate dress is worn for school; administering and documenting morning medications; reporting on the completion of chores carried out by students; and writing notes to the day counselors concerning the child’s behavior, concerns about dorm issues and necessary medical appointments. Good communication through all levels of care is one of the keys to the success of our program.

Q: How is the Orthogenic School making a positive impact on the lives of these young people?

A: The Orthogenic School provides a milieu therapy experience. This approach recognizes the environment and all the people in it, as important change factors in the child’s life. Dorm mates, schoolmates, teachers, counselors, therapists and supervisors all play a part in the therapeutic experience. All of these key relationships encourage a positive change in the student’s life. I recently accompanied a female student in our transitional living program on a job interview and was impressed with the confident way in which she conducted herself. When this young woman first entered our program, at the age of sixteen, she was non-communicative and had emotional and behavioral issues. Over a three-year period, she progressed through our system, gradually becoming more communicative, assuming a leadership role in her dormitory and academically, taking college level courses. I have witnessed many such young people entering our school with unhealthy belief systems and maladaptive behaviors transform themselves into strong and mentally capable individuals. This is the positive impact we are having on the lives of young people.
Staff HIGHLIGHTS

We are pleased to welcome several new additions to our professional staff. Richard Alan Epstein, Jr., M.A. and Alan J. Schmit, L.C.S.W., will work both as therapists and counselors with students at the Orthogenic School.

Mr. Epstein received his undergraduate degree in psychology from Bates College and his M.A. in Psychology from the University of Chicago. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in psychology at the University of Chicago and a Fellowship recipient from the Institute for Psychoanalysis. Previously, he was a Residential Clinical Counselor at the Gould Farm in Massachusetts, a Diagnostic Assessment Extern at the Orthogenic School and a Therapy Extern at the Center for Cognitive Therapy (University of Chicago Hospitals). A published author, Mr. Epstein is currently co-editor of the journal, Residential Treatment for Children and Youth. In his leisure time, Richard enjoys playing the violin (including “Old Time Fiddle” music) and fly-fishing brooks and streams for the perfect catch.

A graduate of Eastern Michigan University with a B.S. in Special Education, Alan Schmit continued his education at Wayne State University where he received the Master of Social Work Degree. His clinical experience includes working at Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital in Hoffman Estates, Spring Harbor Hospital in South Portland, Maine and Huron Oaks, part of St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Over the years, Alan has developed special interests in photography, woodworking, hiking and cycling. He looks forward to sharing his photography and woodworking expertise with students at the “O” School.

Welcome Richard and Alan!

Student ACTIVITIES

The Arts Program, under the creative direction of Michelle Zarrilli, is offering students at the “O” School some wonderful opportunities this school year. The school in association with its neighbor, the Hyde Park Day School, has established an exciting Artist in Residence Program that will feature the art forms of quilting, photography and installation art throughout the 2000-2001 school year. As students at the “O” School already have weekly art classes in drawing, painting, ceramics and other mediums, the object of the residency program is to incorporate the new art forms into the existing arts curriculum. Michelle Zarrilli remarks that “the students at the Orthogenic School are both invested and gifted in the arts and the artist in residence program is integral to their everyday lives.” The residency allows students to learn directly from the masters as they demonstrate their art and discuss various techniques. Students will then have the opportunity to create their own work inspired by the presence of each visiting artist.

Susan Young (Quilting) is the first artist the students will work with. Ms. Young has been quilting for over 25 years, has been a consultant and teacher in many educational settings and has had her “Stories of Inspiration,” behind four of her quilts, included in the permanent file of the Library of Congress, American Folk Life Center in Washington, D.C. While at the Orthogenic School, Ms. Young will work with the students in creating a collaborative story-quilt, teaching them new techniques, enhancing artistic expression and strengthening team-building skills.

“Within our school community students are experiencing and expressing themselves in the arts every day,” states Michelle Zarrilli. “The next step for our arts program is to create a connection between our students’ art and the art being made in the community. We believe that the experience of meeting and learning from working artists will be a genuine source of inspiration to our students.”