

Greetings From TACCLD's President, Lois J. Burke

Counselor, The Ohio State University Office for Disability Services

Hello Everyone! As always, thanks for the opportunity to have served as this organization's president for one more year! I also extend a very special thank you to the people who comprise the TACCLD Planning Committee. Many of them have served for several years. The conference is a success each year due to the hard and dedicated work of the Committee who work along with me in coordinating the conference.

The 17th Annual TACCLD conference was held at the Concourse Hotel and Conference Center on February 27, 2004. It was definitely a success with 175 persons in attendance! The day began with a wonderful keynote presentation by Chris Filler whose topic was "Successful Futures---Continuing Education for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder." In particular, she focused on Asperger's Disorder in regards to how it is diagnosed, its characteristics, and areas of consideration for transition to work and higher education. It was an excellent presentation and was well received by the attendees and was rated very highly in the overall conference evaluation.



Keynote Speaker Chris Filler during her presentation on Autism Spectrum Disorder.

There was a good variety of session topics and some very good speakers. One of the highlights of each year's conference is the scholarship luncheon. Five \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to some very deserving people – (see article in this edition). The Silent Auction and raffle yielded a record amount of money (approximately \$1,700) for scholarship purposes. Please keep in mind that 100% of the money from the Silent Auction goes toward the scholarships.

Plans are underway for **TACCLD 2005**. This will be the 18th annual conference! The date of the conference is **Friday, February 25**. TACCLD will again be moving a new location! The conference will be held at the **Blackwell Inn** in the Fisher College of Business located at the Ohio State University. This five-star hotel provides a luxurious environment for our conference and will provide attendees with a "retreat" in a very special setting. The sales manager that I have been working with has provided enough incentives to make this an affordable venture for TACCLD. He has worked hard to "court" our business and wants it to be a special day for our attendees since some of us have few professional days that can be used for a conference such as this one. If your concern is paying for parking (this has not been the case for many years), *please* do not fret about this one item. TACCLD will pick up the \$5.00 cost for the one-day conference parking for each attendee that completes and hands in an overall conference evaluation.

For the first time, TACCLD will be sending out two newsletters this year. In the Fall, you can expect to receive the autumn edition of the newsletter that will contain the registration materials and the scholarship application. More details will be provided about the conference location, keynote speaker, conference theme and session topics.

Please mark your calendars for Friday, February 25, 2005 and plan to attend TACCLD 2005! I look forward to seeing you all next year!

Meet TACCLD's 2004 Scholarship Winners!



Pictured left to right are TACCLD's \$1,000 Scholarship Winners: *Kelly Marasco, Nick Wantz, Tracy Rutherford, Katie Chandler*

Kelly Marasco

Kelly is from Indian Hill High School and was nominated by her tutor Marty McGlinchey. Kelly has been a member of Family Career and Community Leaders of America, Buddy Club, Spirit Club, and Earth Club. She has also shown her leadership as a Thespian and Color Guard Captain. Kelly has received awards such as Outstanding Color Guard and Scholastic Achievement for Work and Family Life. In 9th grade she received the Coveted Freshman Team Award.

Kelly is successful because she always has a plan and the determination to follow the plan. When she arrives for tutoring, she outlines what she needs to accomplish during that time. She welcomes constructive criticism and accepts the fact that she may have to spend more time revising her papers than many other students. One moment that was shared by her nominator was when Kelly chose not to attend a Buddy Club social activity on a Saturday afternoon because she had set aside time that afternoon to work on a paper. Kelly's English teacher notes that knowing that she reads slowly and that reading and writing do not come easily, Kelly independently began reading and critiquing books for her English class over the summer. Kelly knows her weaknesses, but she also knows her goals, has the confidence and strength to rise above challenges, and most importantly, she has tremendous self-respect. She cannot walk away from an assignment or a requirement unless she knows that she gave it her best. Kelly takes school day by day, keeps a healthy

attitude and stays the course. She is not a sprinter; she's a marathon runner! Kelly will attend the College of Mt. St. Joseph and major in Early Childhood Education.

Nick Wantz

Nick is from Marysville High School and was nominated by his tutor, Candace Parke. Because of his academics, leadership, service, and character, Nick was inducted into the National Honor Society. He's been a member of Marching Band all 4 years of high school. He has been on the swim team for 2 years and earned his varsity letter as a junior. Nick is an active member of his church and has participated on a mission trip to Maine. Nick is a member of the scout troop and has demonstrated his leadership abilities while serving as a Quartermaster. As a senior patrol leader he has worked with the younger scouts to help them learn scouting skills. Nick has attended leadership trainings and applied what he has learned to a variety of experiences. He has also recently completed his project for his Eagle Scout Degree. As a member of the First Presbyterian Church, he actively participates in weekly services as sound coordinator. He is also involved with the weekly youth program.

In addition to his involvement in his school and community activities, Nick has been enrolled in college preparatory curriculum and is a good self-advocate in using the resources that are available to him. Nick plans to attend the University of Toledo and major in engineering.

Tracy Rutherford

Tracy is from Marysville High School and was nominated by her tutor, Kay Bishop. Tracy works diligently to achieve and will redo, retest, ask for help when needed and strive for perfection. She does this with a positive, cheerful attitude.

Tracy is a member of the National Honor Society, FCCLA and is also secretary of the Leo Club which is community service organization. Through the Leo Club, Tracy helps senior citizens and disabled community members. Tracy also participates in Big Brothers and Big Sisters program and tutors at one of the elementary schools in the district. Tracy also works about 25 hours a week at Kmart as a cashier.

Tracy has earned a 3.9 grade point average in a college preparatory curriculum. She is a strong self-

advocate and has excellent dedication to her learning. Tracy sets high goals for herself and achieves those goals through perseverance. She leads by example and is an excellent role model for all students, but especially students with disabilities. Tracy will attend Ohio Dominican and plans to earn a bachelor's degree in the area of social work.

Katie Chandler

Katie was nominated by her tutor, Donna Eikleberry. Katie is a South Central High School student who attends EHOVE Career Center where she is part of a Technical Preparatory program called Interactive Media Technologies. Katie chose to leave the security of her own home school for a more challenging curriculum. She is motivated to learn the subject matter and does high quality work when completing her assignments. Katie sets goals for herself and works to achieve those goals. An example is Katie's willingness to take High School English and College English to improve her English skills. Katie is very much a self-advocate. When necessary she will request that her IEP accommodations or modifications be acknowledged. She uses a courteous and tactful approach with other students and adults. Katie is very persistent in getting answers to questions. If a teacher or student cannot assist her, she will find someone who will or she will use her computer skills to find the answers. She is a resourceful young lady with a great deal of perseverance.

Katie has taken an active role in her school and her community as a leader. She has held officer positions in her home school's chapter of FFA. During her junior year she placed 5th in the National FFA Dairy Handlers Career Development event in Louisville, Kentucky. She was accepted to Buckeye Girls State and earned her State FFA Degree. Katie is secretary of Business Professionals of America at EHOVE and also a member of the National Honor Society, 4-H, Junior Fair Board, Car Teens, and auxiliary member of the American Legion.

For several years Katie has been involved in her own swine business. She has traveled out of state for the purpose of purchasing a select breed. She raises them and shows them at the Huron County Fair. This is her way of earning money for college. Last year Katie initiated a fundraiser for the EHOVE prom through a successful kiss the pig contest. Katie will attend ATI and major in Agriculture Business.

The **Hal Hazelett Scholarship Award** is named in memory of Hal Hazelett, who was a dedicated Math teacher and TACCLD member. This award recognizes an exemplary LD student who plans to major in the area of education. This year, the Hal Hazelett Award was awarded to **Ryan Morgan**.

Ryan attends DeSales High School and was nominated by his tutor Sandra Lauvray. Ryan was originally diagnosed with dyslexia in 2nd grade and has attempted to overcome his disability through a multitude of placements and programs through the years such as Reading Recovery, summer school, private tutoring, full time and part-time SLD placement, Phono-Graphix, and Wilson Reading. He has traveled as far as Florida for remediation and has spent hours performing tracking exercises under the direction of a pediatric optometrist. Early in elementary school, Ryan even wore special glasses with blue lenses hoping they would be the magic key to helping him learn to read. Ryan continues to work at improving his skills and even now participates in private therapy.

But Ryan's life is about far more than disabilities and evaluations. His mother recognized early in his life that physical activity strengthened Ryan both physically and emotionally. Ryan participated in several sports but relished the time he was able to spend wrestling which he began at age 5. Ryan has participated in several tournaments throughout Ohio, traveled to Pennsylvania and West Virginia for wrestling camps, and represented Ohio on the Ohio All-Star Wrestling Team. He earned local league titles, team's captain, most valuable wrestler, and a national championship in Birmingham, Alabama.

In addition to his athletic ability Ryan was selected by a panel of teachers to represent DeSales at the High O'Brian Youth Leadership seminar. He was also selected to participate in the Governor's Youth Seminar for People with Disabilities. Ryan has also been an active community member as a volunteer in litter prevention cleanups, crop walks against hunger, and local food and clothing drives.

Ryan Morgan is simply a child who would not give up. He recognizes the importance of setting goals and working hard to reach them. That long hard struggle had made him the outstanding young man that he is today. Ryan plans to become a health and physical education teacher.

Finding the Right College, and Getting In

By *JOHN O'NEIL*

April 13, 2003

Ask B. J. Weimer how long she has been thinking about college choices for her daughter, Rachel, a senior in St. Louis with a learning disability, and she lets out a sound that's both a laugh and a sigh. "Oh, about since seventh grade!" she says. Mrs. Weimer may be joking, but her timing is not far off, according to administrators, advocates and educational consultants. Their message: the college search process is the same for learning disabled students as for everybody else -- but more so. "A lot of the questions are not that different than for any student," says J. Thomas Viall, executive director of the International Dyslexia Association. "They're just in a little more depth."

Here is some guidance.

PLAN EARLY: A brochure prepared for special education students by the University of Connecticut starts its college preparation timeline in eighth grade. "Admittedly, no eighth or ninth grader knows what they want to do in college," says Joan M. McGuire, a professor of special education there. But college should be kept in mind when planning for high school. For example, disabled students often seek waivers allowing them to skip classes in weak areas, like foreign languages, only to find they are a prerequisite at a chosen college. Dr. McGuire suggests taking Latin, because speed and auditory skills are less important, or taking difficult classes pass-fail to avoid damaging G.P.A.'s.

REMEMBER THE RESUME: "Many of these students are working so hard to get good grades in high school that they don't feel they have time to do other things," like the after-school activities that show a well-rounded background, says Lydia Block, an educational consultant in Columbus, Ohio. "They can be less attractive candidates as a result if they're not planning. If they start as ninth graders, they can find ways to do these things."

GET PAPERWORK IN ORDER: Colleges are required to accommodate only legally documented disabilities, and most want recent evaluations. Beth Robinson of the College Board, which administers the SAT's, says students who seek accommodations on testing can use that process as a dry run, since most admissions offices want the same documents as the board.

TAKE A TRIAL RUN: Colleges often offer summer classes open to younger students, and they can build confidence and give a clearer picture of how a student might perform in college, says Marshall Shumsky, a Houston consultant. Landmark College in Putney, Vt., which specializes in learning disabilities, offers special summer programs for high school students.

CHECK SERVICES: First, consider schools that meet your interests and desires in terms of size, location, cost and atmosphere. Then narrow down the list to those that offer appropriate support services (resources include "Peterson's Colleges for Students With Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorder" and "The K&W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled"). Experts suggest calling a college's office of disability -- anonymously -- to ask about services in general and then how specific problems might be handled. If the office seems unsure, uninformed or unenthusiastic, drop it. If a college merits a visit, educators recommend the acid test: ask to speak with current students with disabilities.

BE OPEN: Perhaps the most delicate issue is whether to be candid about a disability. Students and parents have "a very natural fear" of discrimination, says Mr. Viall, whose organization was part of a lawsuit that ended the practice of flagging the standardized test scores of students who got extra time. But he and other experts seem unanimous in recommending disclosure. "Bottom line is, if you want accommodation you have to disclose," he says. Dr. Block agrees, but she cautions about overemphasizing the problem. Although it's tempting to write an application essay stressing the obstacles you've faced, she suggests submitting a supplementary essay discussing those challenges and using the main one to show that you are more than your disability.

LOOK IN THE MIRROR: Being realistic is crucial. That doesn't mean avoiding challenges, just being clear about what help is needed for the best chance of success, says Robert H. Pasternak, who directs special education policy for the federal Department of Education. "We should be encouraging people with learning disabilities to have high expectations," he says. "If you don't have dreams, they can't come true."

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Asperger's Syndrome and College Support Services

At the 2003 TACCLD Conference, a concurrent session focused on helping students with Asperger's Syndrome be successful in college and other postsecondary settings. The session was presented by three professionals from Wright State University: Smita Majumdar, psychology trainee; Ali Meatchem, postdoctoral psychology fellow; and Jeffrey Vernooy, director, Office of Disability Services. Following is information from their session regarding Asperger's Syndrome, (AS), as well as a listing of effective practices and procedures to support students with this disability.

Problems Faced by People with Asperger's Syndrome

Socialization difficulties or impairments

- Inability to understand complex rules and nuances of social interactions
- Lack of empathy, inability to understand or respond to other people's needs, might show wrong emotions or laugh at a wrong time
- Naive, inappropriate and one-sided interactions
- Although having the desire, they have difficulties forming friendships
- Generally have well-developed speech but poor social communication ability
- Likely to behave inappropriately with peers and authority figures, ignore them or might appear rude and defiant
- Tendency to have difficulty working in groups or living in shared rooms in the dormitory

Speech and language peculiarities

- Language sound overly formal and pedantic
- Very literal understanding of language; does not understand jokes, irony or metaphors
- Less likely to engage in turn-taking in social situations
- Trouble expressing their needs using verbal communication to others
- Difficulty in subject matters that require good metaphorical and abstract reasoning skills such as philosophy and poetry

Non-verbal communication problem

- Use inappropriate gage and body language

- Problem judging social distance or physical boundaries
- Misinterpret social cues, and have limited or inappropriate use and understanding of facial expression
- Flat or monotone voice with the lack of appropriate intonation
- Might make other people uncomfortable around them and as a result, they may avoid him or her socially

Restricted range of interests

- Intense absorption or eccentric preoccupation with certain subject matter
- Tend to relentlessly "lecture" on areas of their interest.
- Ask repetitive questions and have trouble letting go of their ideas.
- Argue relentlessly with peers and professors if they feel they have more expertise in that particular area, and might disrupt class process

Insistence on sameness

- Easily overwhelmed by minimal change in the environment and are highly sensitive to environment stressors
- Engage in nonfunctional routine and inflexible patterns of behaviors
- Ask the same question over and over again to maintain the sense of sameness
- Wear the same clothes and eat the same kind of food day in and day out.
- Transition to college, living independently and adjusting to schedule change every quarter becomes challenging for them

Overly sensitive to environmental stimuli

- Hypersensitive to certain sounds, tastes, smells and sights.
- Might have difficulty filtering out noise in the environment that can make their world seem very chaotic.
- In class, during discussions they might feel trapped or disturbed by the amount of activity, or they might space-out.

Poor motor coordination

- Physically clumsy and awkward, have stiff awkward gaits, may experience fine motor coordination deficits.
- Encounter difficulties in taking down notes or writing tests.

Academic problems

- Usually have average to above average intelligence, but lack abstract thinking, expressing integrative understanding and comprehension skills.
- Excellent rote memory, but it is mechanical in nature without any improvisation on their part.
- Pedantic speaking style and impressive vocabularies often give the false impression that they understand what they are talking about, however their language use is extremely concrete and literal.
- Poor concentration as they are often off task and distracted by internal and external stimuli, so might experience difficulty in attending to class lectures or take tests in classroom settings.
- Tend to be very disorganized and have poor ability to comprehensively plan events.
- Attention tends to get drawn to irrelevant stimuli in the environment as they have difficulty distinguishing unnecessary from the essential.
- Poor problem-solving ability.
- Have difficulty with auditory processing of information and fare better with visual modes of learning.

Recommendations for parents, college disability service providers, and instructors

- Matching the person's needs with the accommodations provided by the college, and also provide information about the cost of some services. Remember some colleges will be more amenable than others to provide certain recommendations.
- Stress the importance of taking college prep classes in high school.
- Good induction and orientation to the college campus by providing tour guide services.
- Determine access to support staff if there is a crisis which arises. Better to establish contact with one or two particular people who are familiar with the disorder and the student is comfortable working with.
- Secure an acceptable place for the student to live; dorms are often too noisy and chaotic for them. If the student does live in the dorms, work on getting a single room accommodation; otherwise, make sure that they touch base with their roommate(s) before moving to campus.

- Ensure that there's help from the disability services office to talk to professors about their problems and accommodations.
- Change is difficult for them, and the beginning of each semester is stressful, therefore:
 1. Provide a copy of the syllabus before the start of the semester; no changes should be made without sufficient notice, and
 2. Help or encourage them to make a detailed organizer for the semester and give a copy to family and friends who can help keep them on track.
- Help convert auditory information into visual modes to enhance understanding.
- Provide the student with preferential seating away from auditory or visual distractions.
- Hypersensitivity to noise can be filtered by the use of a noise buster.
- Provide permission to walk out of class when they need to escape stimulus or overload.
- Alter the attendance requirement as a part of the grade as long as adequate coursework is maintained.
- Grant permission to work on assignments and activities individually, rather than in-group format.
- Provide access to the adapted computer lab for bigger screens and adjustable glare monitors.
- During exams, provide a distraction-free room, extra time and if necessary, test proctors.
- Establish or help find specific interest groups matching the interest of the individual to help him socialize.
- Identify Asperger's Syndrome support groups in the community or help establish one.
- Help the student identify quiet or safe places on campus where they can go and relax if the environment becomes over stimulated.
- Have a campus-wide resource list available focusing on AS concerns.

Recommendations for students

- The individual should be self-motivated to pursue a college education.
- The individual must have an accurate understanding of the expectations and responsibilities associated with college.

- Sometimes it's advisable to start with a two-year community college to ease the transition process.
- Arrive a little early on the campus to be familiarized before other students move in.
- Go to college stores during off-peak hours to investigate what is available.
- Have a consistent parking place, or use the school shuttle service to avoid confusion.
- Seek the services of a peer mentor to help organize, sort out deadlines, plan for events, find car pools and liaise between the individual and other people on campus.
- Carry a photocopy of an official medical letter stating the diagnosis and giving a brief explanation of the ways it is likely to effect the person.
- Avoid taking courses requiring a high level of abstract knowledge or understanding of the metaphorical language for college credit.
- Audit social communication courses as a listener to cognitively understand the nuances of human communication.
- Minimize the student's enrollment in courses that require constant change in daily routine.
- Ask the professor for advance copies of lecture notes or get permission to tape lectures or get the aid of an in-class scribe.

References / Useful Websites

www.users.dircon.co.uk - Presents a number of guidelines and suggestions for college students with AS.

www.nami.org - The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) is a not-for-profit, grassroots, self-help and advocacy organization. The site presents a number of recommendations for parents and professionals about diagnosis and management of Asperger's.

www.aspenj.org - ASPEN (Asperger Syndrome Education Network) is a non-profit organization, providing information in area of appropriate educational programs and placement for individuals affected with Asperger Syndrome.

www.asperger.net - AAPC - Autism Asperger Publishing Company provides resources for practical solutions related to problems associated with Asperger Syndrome.

www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger
OASIS (Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support)

College Preparation Publication Available

*Submitted By Wayne Cocchi – Director,
Columbus State Community College Department of
Disability Services*

TACCLD's Lydia Block and Wayne Cocchi have written a publication for the Association on Higher Education and Disability entitled "*Preparing for College: Options for Students with Learning Disabilities.*"

Selecting a college can be a daunting task for students and their parents when trying to match up a postsecondary institution to meet the individual needs of the student. There are many factors that must be looked at particularly if the student will be requiring accommodations and support services while taking classes. The search should begin during the high school years and we recommend beginning the sophomore year so that an appropriate choice can be made.

This fourteen-page booklet can be used by students, parents and teachers as they prepare to explore a student's options for higher education following high school graduation. The booklet is broken down in to easy to read sections that cover topics such as:

- Preparing yourself academically
- Differences between high school and college
- Support services in college
- Understanding your disability and advocacy
- Postsecondary options
- Funding, and
- Beginning your college search

In addition, a list of questions that may help in researching college options is provided.

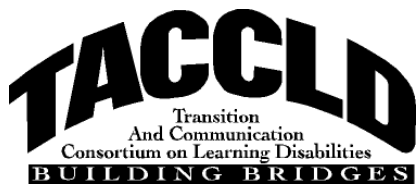
If you attended TACCLD's 2004 conference you were provided with on free copy of this publication in your folder.

If you would like to order copies you may contact the Association on Higher Education and Disability at www.ahead.org. Pricing costs are:

1 - 25 copies: \$1.25/each

26 - 50 copies: \$1.15/each

51+ copies: \$1.00/each



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COMING SOON!

Guide to Ohio Colleges

TACCLD is in the process of developing a guidebook to Ohio colleges. This guidebook should help students in transition to higher education select colleges that may be appropriate for them. Surveys were sent to all Ohio colleges to gather information. We are almost ready to go to print. Look for information about getting the guidebook in the Autumn TACCLD newsletter.

OPEC-D

The Ohio Postsecondary Education Consortium on Disabilities

Mark your calendars!!!! The 2005 OPEC-D conference will be held on **Thursday, February 24** at the **Blackwell Inn** located in the Ohio State University Fisher College of Business.

Additional information concerning topics and speakers will be provided later. For more information regarding planning, please contact Lois Burke at burke.4@osu.edu or (614) 292-3307.