

# INSIDE

THE *Faison* SCHOOL  
FOR AUTISM

Where exceptional progress is possible

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## SERVICES PROVIDED

- On-Site School, Preschool to Grade 12
- Home Program Support
- Program Evaluation
- School Consultation
- Workshops and Training

## School Administration

**Director of the Autism Center of Virginia**  
Robert Cohen, Ph.D.  
828-3147

**Director of Education**  
Katherine Matthews, Ph.D.  
827-3814

**Director of Administration**  
Shirley Wiley, Ph.D.  
827-1599

**Director of Development and Finance**  
Wendy Kreuter  
828-4708

**Program Coordinator – Preschool**  
Adam Warman

**Program Coordinator – School Program**  
Ania Young

**Off Site Program Coordinator**  
Jennifer Camblin

**Registry**  
Colin Pottie

## Board of Directors

**Chairman**  
Alan I. Kirshner  
Markel Corporation

**President**  
Don Faison  
Markel Corporation

**Treasurer**  
Debbie Edmunds  
Robert Cohen, Ph.D.  
VCU  
Peter deGroot  
BB&T  
Paul Edmunds  
Edmunds White Partners

Lynne Faison  
Flo Guzman  
Kris R. Keeney, PC  
Digitalaw  
Philip W. Klaus, Jr.  
Children's Wear Digest

John Maloney  
Davenport & Company, LLC  
Angie Sadler

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# Life as Adults:

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing older children with autism and their families is what to do beyond the school years. Questions of residence and vocational skills, as well as education become paramount for families. "Without an education that focuses on the development of personal competence, life skills, and employment opportunities, young adults with disabilities are greatly handicapped in the complex modern society in which we live. Their education should focus on functional activities taught in real-life situations." reports Dr. Paul Wehman of Virginia Commonwealth University (2001, *Life Beyond the Classroom* (p.xix). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.).

As the school-age program continues to grow, The Faison School is committed to addressing these transition challenges through a number of Community Based Instruction (CBI) initiatives. The school currently has progressive CBI transition programs related to developing daily living skills, vocational skills and typical peer interaction.



**Local Grocery Stores:** Students participate in weekly trips to the grocery store. They take a written list of materials needed (sometimes using a grocery store board) and locate items which they can prepare for lunch in the upcoming week. Then students greet the cashier, count their money, get change, say good-bye, and carry their bags to the van. They are also beginning to use an ATM card.

**Restaurants:** One student is working on eating at a restaurant. This consists of ordering from a picture menu. He then takes the picture, hands it to the cashier and pays to complete the purchase.



# A Challenging Transition



**Devon and Gracie shopping for groceries.**

**Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden:** Students are visiting the grounds and buildings to become familiar with the setting. Lewis Ginter staff help to expose our students to activities such as sweeping, dusting, and watering. The goal is to identify areas of interest for each student and select volunteer opportunities accordingly. Within the next few months we hope to have an individualized volunteer program for each student.

**Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC):** A student is beginning his vocational program at the local ARC where he spends a significant portion of his day with a Faison teacher learning a variety of vocational and social skills to participate in community programs.

**Senior Community:** The Faison School has partnered with Beth Sholom Lifecare Community to create volunteer and potential employment opportunities. The vision of this program is to form relationships among clients at the nursing home and Faison students through an intergenerational approach to therapy. One goal is for the students to learn new skills through volunteering in areas of food preparation, facility maintenance, and gardening.

**Luther Memorial and NorthStar Academy:** Faison students attend classes with age-appropriate peers to learn social interaction and new skills while slowly fading out Faison assistance.

Devon, a 15-year-old student at The Faison School, has participated in the daily living and vocational CBI programs. Ania Young, the school-age Program Coordinator, is very pleased with his progress. “Devon is learning to generalize important skills he learns at school in the community. These include social interactions, communication and self-management.”

The Faison School will be working to develop committed volunteer jobs around Richmond. “It is important for young adults with autism and other developmental challenges to have these job opportunities once basic skills are established” says Kathy Matthews, Faison’s Director of Education.

The school will continue to pursue new ways to meet these important transition needs and enable each child with autism to participate as fully as possible in their community.

## Autism Center of Virginia

# Registry

The goal of the Autism Center of Virginia *Registry* is to foster research on autism and autism related disorders. The *Registry's* recent research projects include a two-phase study on how parents adapt and cope with the daily demands of raising a young child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). If you would like to enroll your child/family member in the *Registry* or are interested in receiving more information on the research supported by the *Registry* please contact us:

**Autism Center of Virginia Registry**  
 P.O. Box 980489 • Richmond, VA 23298-0489  
 Telephone: 804-827-3801 (ext 315)  
 or Toll-free: 1-866-628-2268  
 E-mail: [autismreg@vcu.edu](mailto:autismreg@vcu.edu)  
[www.vcuhealth.org/vtcc/Autism%20Registry.htm](http://www.vcuhealth.org/vtcc/Autism%20Registry.htm)

## Wendy Kreuter (TFS) receives \$5,000 from Murray Howard of St. Constantine and Helen's Greek Orthodox Cathedral during the Greek Festival.



## Employees of the Month

### JANUARY

**Amanda Laz**  
Lead School Age Teaching Assistant  
B.S. Biology from James Madison University



### FEBRUARY

**Jennifer Camblin**  
Lead School Age Teaching Assistant  
B.S. Psychology from Mary Washington College, M.Ed. Special Education from George Mason University. BCABA



### MARCH

**Kari O'Connell**  
Lead School Age Teaching Assistant  
B.A. Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University



**Kelly Graham**  
Preschool Teaching Assistant  
B.A. Art History from the University of Virginia



# Richmond Public Schools Partners with The Faison School

Richmond Public Schools will partner with The Faison School to establish a class for preschool children with autism this fall. The preschool class is a collaborative effort of Richmond's speech therapists, occupational therapists, parent resource coordinators and exceptional education department. With financial support for consultation from The Community Foundation, the class will open in a Richmond Public School in September and be staffed by a city school teacher and assistants. The Faison School will assist in developing the curriculum based on the empirically proven Applied Behavior Analysis technique in which it specializes. Faison's off-site Program Coordinator, Jennifer Camblin, and other Faison teachers will also be in the Richmond classroom to provide staff development.

The classroom will open with six children. "It will be structured in centers for group, play, and individual work instruction. The children

will rotate through the centers during the day," said Kathy Matthews, Director of Education at The Faison School.

The preschool class partnership is a first in the Richmond area. It represents a tremendous step for The Faison School and children with autism. Part of the school's mission is community education to reach professionals who serve the increasing numbers of children with autism and their families. Other area school systems have expressed interest in establishing a similar collaboration and this program will provide the model.

Harley Tomey, Richmond's Director of Exceptional Education, told the *Richmond Times Dispatch* "the partnership is a boon to the public school district, which serves a number of preschool students with autism but has no specialized classes for them".

"It really is a phenomenal opportunity for us" Tomey said.



L to R back row: Michael Hall, Richard McNeil, Margaret Hill, Kent Hill, Myra Goodman Smith,  
L to R front row: Billie Brown, Kim Daniel, Katherine Godin, Wendy Kreuter (TFS), John O'Neill, Jon Moss

## LMR TEAM CREATES EARLY INTERVENTION CAMPAIGN

The River Runners project team from the 2006 Leadership Metro Richmond class presented an early intervention marketing campaign to The Faison School in June as the culmination of a year long project. The team chose The Faison School's project to create a campaign to reach parents and other caregivers of young children with the message "Learn the signs. Act early." This message is part of a larger campaign originated by the Centers for Disease Control nationally.

The team interviewed parents, pediatricians, and day care providers to find out the best way to reach families affected by autism. The interviews provided valuable suggestions to help The Faison School become a first line resource for those needing information. As a result, the school will begin revamping its web site this summer. Other parts of the campaign will be implemented through out the year. Thank you LMR and The River Runners!

# Art for Autism

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Art for Autism Gala was held on April 7, 2006 at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. The Gala raised over \$300,000 for The Faison School despite an exciting wind gust that interrupted the live auction.

The live auction was led by Mark Motley and featured art by 21 local and nationally known artists as well as week long trips to London and Santa Fe. A silver gelatin print by Sally Mann, wooden table by Ronnie Pucket and photograph by Emmet Gowin brought the highest art bids. Dining, jewelry and golf outings were among the most popular silent auction items.



● **Sandra Mihaloff, Clarence & Amelia Campbell**

Art for Autism was hosted by SunTrust and Markel Corporation with supporting sponsors Edmunds White Partners and Thompson, Davis and Company. A cocktail reception included a number of special guests: John and Carolyn Snow, Attorney General Bob McDonnell, Lt. Governor Bill Bolling, Rep. Eric Cantor, Del. Frank Hall, VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Richmond Public Schools Superintendent Deborah Jewell-Sherman, and award winning artists Kendall Buster, Robert Stuart and Heide Trepanier.

“We couldn’t be more pleased or thankful for the generosity of the artists, sponsors, and patrons who support this Gala and The Faison School” said Alan Kirshner, Markel CEO and the school chairman. “With the help of our many friends, we are able to continue growing and assisting the families and children affected by autism”.



● **Bob McDonnell, Heide Trepanier, Eric Cantor, Alan Kirshner**



● **Jan Crowell, Mark & Terri O’Brien, Patty Carr, Debbie Edmunds**



● **Libby Lewis, Paul and Nancy Springman, True and Charlie Luck**



**Save the Date**  
for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual  
**Art for Autism Gala**  
to be held at the  
**Lewis Ginter**  
**Botanical Garden on**  
**April 20, 2007.**

## Employees of the Month

### APRIL

*Dan Irwin*

**School Age Teacher**  
B.S. Psychology from Longwood College, M.Ed. Special Education from VCU



*Beth Braddock*  
**Lead Preschool Teaching Assistant**  
B.A. Psychology University of Richmond



### MAY

*Jennifer Gentry*

**Lead Preschool Teaching Assistant**  
B.S. Psychology from VPI



*Eli Newcomb*  
**Lead School Age Teaching Assistant**  
B.S. Psychology from University of Mary Washington



### JUNE

*Vicki Lo*

**Preschool Teacher**  
B.A. Psychology U.VA and M.Ed. VCU



*Jessica Starring*  
**School Age Teaching Assistant**  
B.A. Psychology VCU



# A Long Walk Down The Block

As the school year concludes for many children, some changes are also on the horizon for Maddie, an adorable five year old girl who attends The Faison School for Autism's preschool program. She's preparing to say goodbye to some new friends she made this year at the Josephine Newbury School for Childhood Education, a preschool for typically-developing children a block away from The Faison School. Many of her friends will have the summer off, but she'll spend the time continuing to practice her skills and learn new things at Faison.

Maddie has worked very hard to be ready to learn with her peers. A year ago, she didn't talk very much and didn't have the social skills necessary to play with or be near other children. Much of her day was very difficult for Maddie and her family. Even though she was able to say a few words, she rarely used them. Other times, her inability to express her needs would upset her to the point of tantrums and aggression. Once Maddie learned that there were other ways to communicate, though, her behavior changed dramatically.

She very quickly began to master educational goals involving counting, toy play, sorting, puzzles, writing, and drawing. Along with many of these basic academic skills came what everyone was waiting to hear...an often-used voice. Maddie began to speak significantly more as the days and weeks progressed. By late fall, the staff at The Faison School and her family decided it was time to move to the next step. Maddie was off to a typical preschool for part of her day.

With one of her teachers at her side, Maddie walked

down the block to her new school each day. She loved it from the start. As her teacher puts it, "Maddie enters the classroom with a sense of awe and wonder." She began to use skills that had been taught at Faison in a variety of different settings. This generalization of skills can often be very difficult, but Maddie showed just how successful she could be.

As the weeks went by, she began to engage more often with her peers and was soon leading them in games of "Ring Around the Rosie." Maddie still needs support to learn

**Maddie enters the classroom with a sense of awe and wonder.**

and use her skills, but her team is dedicated to fading that support as soon as she is ready.

Near the end of the year, a teacher asked Maddie, "Do you know what number this is?" Maddie quipped, "Of course I do." It's been a long road and a lot of work for Maddie, but it has paid off.

By the time next fall comes around, Maddie will be ready to rejoin her classmates for a longer part of her day. She'll dance, sing, play games, and learn alongside her typically-developing friends. But she'll also have to work hard and patiently wait her turn. Will she be ready for it? Of course she will.



# OPEN GYM Project

Finding opportunities for constructive play and vigorous exercise for children with autism is never easy. "My idea was to provide a free, meaningful afternoon event for these kids," said John W. Maloney, an organizer for the Open Gym Project. This spring, on six Sunday afternoons, some 12+ children with autism got special trips to the gym for the single purpose of having fun. Hosted by the Collegiate School, "The Open Gym Project" brought upper school buddies from Collegiate together with area children with autism on a 1:1 ratio to work on new skills, like basketball, track and soccer. Open Gym players had their own jerseys and numbers, and the last session included trophies awarded to every participant.

Faison staff attended the Open Gym sessions as consultants, and sponsors Paul D. Koonce and Davenport & Company, LLC funded the program. "Seeing those kids running around the football field or playing catch with their buddies was rewarding for all of us who participated— next fall will be just as much fun," Maloney said. For more information, e-mail [opengym@comcast.net](mailto:opengym@comcast.net), or call 512-9072 and leave a message.



## Faison Staff Participates in National ABA Conference

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Applied Behavior Analysis Convention was held May 26-30 in Atlanta, Georgia. This conference is hosted by the Association for Behavior Analysis which is dedicated to promoting the experimental, theoretical, and applied analysis of behavior.

The ABA Convention offers a unique opportunity for staff at Faison to attend specialized trainings, to interact with professionals in the field, and to contribute to the science through lectures and research. In order to allow as many staff as possible to attend the convention, The Faison School held 2 fundraisers. Over the spring semester, staff raised over \$2500 by selling cookie dough and pizzas and holding a yard sale.

During the conference, the Faison staff participated in several events. They included:

- **A Symposium** on "The Effects of Implementing CABAS components on the Acquisition of Academic Skills and Verbal Behavior in Three Schools for Children Diagnosed with Autism" presented by Kathy Matthews, Ania Young, and Adam Warman from TFS, staff from The Jigsaw School in England, and staff from Centro Al-Mudaris in Spain. The symposium focused on describing The Faison School and how it successfully utilizes several CABAS components.
- **A Symposium** on "Building Evidence-Based and Individually Tailored Instruction in Behavior Analytic Schools for Children with Autism" was presented by Kathy Matthews, TFS, with staff from The Fred S. Keller School (New York), and The Jigsaw School in England. This symposium discussed the necessity of training teachers to be effective scientists.
- **An Expo** on "The Faison School for Autism" and two Posters, "Effective Teaching Strategies: A Comparison of Antecedent and Error Corrections" and "Effect of Performance Feedback on Instructor's Correct Implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans" were presented by Daniel Irwin, Kimberly Oertel, Tiffanie Ellis, Vicki Lo, Jennifer Wade, Jason Detzel, Kathy Matthews, Ania Young, John Tolson, Jennifer Lax, Christina Meluzio, Amanda Laz, Laura Harmon, Scott Nugent, and Lana Swartz from TFS.

## Thanks to Matthew Engiles & Eagle Scout Troop 736,

who took on the Faison School Playground this spring! They raked leaves, power washed the equipment, weather proofed the fence, started a small garden, added Little Tikes sand boxes and benches, and painted basketball lines and a hopscotch area. They also volunteered to be mentors for some of our students.



**OCTOBER 27 & 28**

at the Innsbrook Pavillion

**Preview Party: Thurs. night, October 26**

Visit [www.thefaisonschool.org](http://www.thefaisonschool.org)



## Upcoming Events



**OCTOBER 27 & 28**

**Pumpkinpalooza**

**Fri., Oct. 27 5:00pm - 9:30pm**

**Sat., Oct. 28 Noon until 9:00pm**

A family event that includes artists carving giant pumpkins for awards. Over 25 giant pumpkins will be lit and displayed along with children's activities, food and entertainment. For more information including sponsorship opportunities call (804) 217-7128 or email [pumpkinpalooza@3foldconsulting.com](mailto:pumpkinpalooza@3foldconsulting.com).

### Fall Workshops:

**SEPTEMBER**  
**New Parent Orientation & Overview of Applied Behavior Analysis**

**OCTOBER**  
**Workshop: Teaching Strategies**

**NOVEMBER**  
**Workshop: Language Strategies**

Presented by The Faison School for Autism \*

\* Free to parents and community members  
The Faison School for Autism  
1325 Palmyra Ave, Richmond  
RSVP to [autismcenter@vcu.org](mailto:autismcenter@vcu.org)  
For more information, call 804-827-3801, please check the web site for details and times.

**APRIL 20**

**Art for Autism 2007**  
**Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**

An art auction and gala to benefit The Faison School. Featured artists have included Wolf Kahn and Sally Mann.



For more information and for sponsorship opportunities, contact Wendy Kreuter at 804-828-4708.

## THANK YOU VA UNION UNIVERSITY



The VUU football team & Coach Arrington Jones, III spread mulch donated by Gillies Creek Industrial Recycling on our playground. Pictured are Dr. Shirley Wiley of TFS & the team.