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The right fit: Whittle leaves Carolina First



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Watch Tears to smiles

“Jean’s Man on the Street Video Journal” on www.TheColumbiaStar.com

Mothers of children of cerebral palsy bring innovative program to Columbia



Jean Montgomery was born in Columbia and raised in the Blythewood area of the Midlands. She attended Ridge View High School and graduated from Clemson University with a degree in Communication Studies in May of 2009. She is back in the Columbia area pursuing a career in broadcast journalism.

This week

Pets Inc. in West Columbia has too much love and not enough room. The Director of Pets Inc., Nichole Phelps, says the economy has caused an influx of animals that need loving owners. They are offering free adoptions to try to help their furry friends find happy homes. See Video on www.TheColumbiaStar.com.

Read all about it in *The Columbia Star*

Read about local governments and neighborhood meetings.

Read about Richland County Council, Columbia City Council, West Columbia City Council, and Cayce City Council.

The Columbia Star has served Columbians for 46 years. We continue our goal of publishing the joys, sorrows, and achievements of the people of Columbia.

Story and photos by Pam Edwards

Tears of frustration are turning into smiles of achievement at The Therapy Place due to Conductive Education (CE), a five-week innovative program brought to Columbia by two mothers of children with cerebral palsy, Dawn Darby and Susan Abell.

Children with cerebral palsy, a range of disorders involving the control of muscles, typically receive one to three hours a week of physical therapy, if that. The CE classes at The Therapy Place intensify the children's course of therapy and education, enabling the potential for more rapid progress, and ultimately helping them achieve maximum independence. The children receive therapy three hours a day, five days a week.

During the five-week program this summer, Erika and Peter Bartos, Conductive Education (CE) teachers from Hungary, are using the program developed in the 1950s by neurologist Dr. Andras Peto. CE emphasizes active learning in a group setting. Integration of complex tasks and intentional movements with learning initiates the creation of new neural pathways to the brain. The children can gain improved strength, coordination, and movement. CE uses a holistic approach, promoting the development of the whole child, including physical, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects.

The children, ranging in ages from 18 months to seven years, go through stretching exercises to loosen tightened muscles, learn to sit up straight, and pull themselves into sitting and standing positions. Some are learning to walk on their own, leaving walkers and wheelchairs behind. They have snacks together, cut with scissors, play games, sing songs, run races, and learn potty training.

Frustrated at having to go hours from home and staying away weeks at a time to allow their children to participate in the innovative programs, Dawn Darby and Susan Abell, are

working hard to bring CE to Columbia. They have organized fundraisers, gained donations of time, money, and equipment to realize this dream for their sons and other children in Columbia. These programs are not covered by insurance or Medicaid, and can be expensive.

Darby and Abell's goal is to go farther, taking the five-week summer program to a year-round school for these special needs children. They question why, in an area the size of Columbia, children with special needs do not have access to the types of therapies being offered hours away.

See a little girl go from crying because her legs won't stretch out straight because she's been sitting so long in a wheelchair, to walking out the door of the class-



Carson, age four, learns to squat in preparation for going into a standing position.



Adia, age three, smiles as she walks out of the classroom with the aid of a walker instead of a wheelchair.

room laughing and blowing kisses. See the pride on a little boy's face when he finally learns to put his shoes and socks on by himself. See a child successfully going to the bathroom by himself.

Conductive Education at The Therapy Place has done these things and more for the eight children fortunate to have access to this innovative summer program.

To see what can be done to assist The Therapy Place to be a year-round school for these children and others in Columbia, visit www.thetherapyplace.org. Contributions may be mailed to P.O. Box 5903, Columbia, SC 29250.



Clara, 18 months, enjoys snack time with a little help from her grandmother.

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