



PEDIATRICS

Kentuckiana Children's Center: Chiropractic's Best Kept Secret

By Sharon A. Vallone, D.C., D.I.C.C.P. (F)

Long heralded for the pioneering efforts of Dr. Lorraine M. Golden in providing Chiropractic care for children with special needs since its inception in 1957, Kentuckiana Children's Center (KCC) continues to serve, quietly and without a fanfare of trumpets, the families of Louisville and the surrounding Kentucky-Indiana basin. It also continues to provide consultation and support to families and chiropractors who have children or patients with special needs around the country and the world as it has for the past 49 years.

KCC today, led by its dedicated and knowledgeable Executive Director Jean Elizabeth and Clinic Director, Dr. Rebekah Wittman, fulfills its mission to improve the lives of children by providing a foundation for healing through integrative chiropractic care. And thanks to the generosity of individuals and organizations, locally and nationally, who believe in the value of KCC's mission and service, these services are provided to all children including those who would otherwise be unable to afford such care.

KCC has witnessed a wide variety of challenges children and their families face, including the devastating aftermath of polio, prenatal and birth injuries, conditions such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other genetic syndromes like cystic fibrosis. Now KCC is seeing an ever growing population of children diagnosed on the Autistic Spectrum or with one of its associated disorders. Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) include Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder — Not Otherwise Specified and Rhett's Syndrome. Some, but not all, of the associated disorders could include ADD-ADHD, Angelman Syndrome, Apraxia, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Fragile X Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Prader-Willi Syndrome and Tourette Syndrome.

In our experience, Chiropractic care provides a sound foundation of care for these children by correcting subluxations resulting in an engagement of their central nervous system enhancing other treatment options for their specific challenges and demonstrating, most importantly, an improvement in quality of life and allowing the child to reach his or her own optimum wellness and level of function. KCC utilizes a chiropractic foundation enhanced by craniosacral therapy, nutritional therapy, occupational therapy, art therapy and social/movement therapies in treating these special children.

The following stories of two of our children show how the KCC team works



together to help a child improve his or her quality of life.

Dennis

Dennis (name changed to protect identity) entered the foster care system in Indiana in February of 2004 when he was six years old. His foster mother, who was referred by a social worker who volunteers at KCC, brought Dennis in for evaluation in December of 2005 when he was seven years old. She had no medical history or background information to provide on the young boy, except that he had been removed from an environment where he had been physically and mentally abused. He was underweight and had scars and open wounds on his face and neck. He had been diagnosed with Autism at the age of four.

When Dennis presented at KCC, the first thing one noticed was the extensive facial scarring. His history was un-specific as to whether those scars were self inflicted (one of the behaviors seen in individuals diagnosed with Autism) or the result of physical abuse. Dennis was nonverbal and only mildly interactive with the adults around him. Because of his diagnosis of Autism he was being medicated with Prozac and Seroquel. Dennis's foster mother related that he frequently displayed social anxiety and manifested serious problems with transition at school by head banging. She felt the teachers would often require him to switch activities too quickly, which would escalate into a melt down. She was concerned that the school was not meeting Dennis's social, educational and psychological needs.

Dennis's physical exam revealed upper cervical dysfunction, with a torti-

collis in right lateral flexion/left rotation and a visible deviation of his mandible. He was also seen frequently pressing the tragus of his ear as if to decrease temporomandibular pain. Dennis had quite a large number of digestive issues as well. He was frequently constipated and at his first evaluation, was not yet toilet trained. His foster mother had already attempted to remove dairy from his diet, but was unfamiliar with how to identify casein in many other foods.

Dennis's initial treatment plan consisted of Chiropractic care with Clinic Director Dr. Rebekah Whitman, who is

tion, which his foster mother has been unable to comply with due to financial limitations. She is currently applying to an organization that provides miscellaneous supplements free to children diagnosed with Autism as they are made available by manufacturers. Unfortunately with these free supplements, it is like receiving a surprise package as the company often sends the "typical" supplements suggested for children diagnosed with Autism as opposed to providing the specific supplements the child needs.

As Dennis progressed through his treatment plan, Dr. Bekah and Katherine concentrated on cervicocranial dysfunction utilizing orthobionomy and craniosacral therapy techniques. Dr. Bekah's next referral was to our occupational therapist, Rusty Henle, OTR, who worked with Dennis concentrating on an oral motor and tactile sensory program.

After several months in his new environment and care at KCC, Dennis's behavior began to change and his health began to improve. His foster mother reported there was a decrease in self abuse (hitting himself) and noticed that he was not pressing on his ear as frequently as before. There was also an escalation in his social and interactive skills. He was babbling more and was beginning to distinctly pronounce a number of words. He was now completely able to control and initiate urination. His constipation had decreased as well.

Dr. Bekah and the staff of KCC continue to work with Dennis's foster mom helping her to find available advocacy to help with getting the educational system accommodate his special needs. Dr. Bekah had intervened on Dennis's behalf with his teachers several times but soon realized that the educational staff and the educational program itself were not adaptable to Dennis's unique needs. Dennis will continue to work with the the KCC team so he becomes more confident and comfortable with himself and his surroundings. The staff at KCC say it is a joy to watch Dennis's loving nature blossom in front of their very eyes.

Rachael

Rachael is an 11-year-old girl who has been seen at Kentuckiana Children's Center (KCC) since March 2002 for challenges associated with Prader Willi Syndrome (PWS). PWS is a genetic disorder of chromosome 15. The syndrome is characterized by hypotonia, hypogonadism, hyperphagia, cognitive impairment, and difficult behaviors. Researchers strongly suspect that the part of the brain called the hypothalamus is the main source of the growth differences in PWS. A tiny part of the central brain, the hypothalamus connects the body's two key systems for survival and maintenance — the nervous system and the endocrine system. In addition to playing a key role in growth and sexual development, the hypothalamus regulates appetite, metabolism, body temperature, mood, and other functions that we know are affected in people with PWS. It is likely that one or more of the genes that are missing (or not functioning) in people with PWS supply essential instructions to this part of the brain.

When Rachael initially came to KCC, her parents' main concerns for her were scoliosis, low muscle tone, and susceptibility to illness. Rachael lived with her

TOP: Clinic Director Dr. Rebekah Whitman and son Isaac with Executive Director Jean Elizabeth outside Kentuckiana's modest home in Louisville, Ky., that continues to bring love and hope to children with special needs regardless of their ability to pay. BELOW: Dr. Whitman, lovingly called "Dr. Bekah" by staff and children, adjusts one of KCC's special kids.



affectionately called "Dr Bekah" by the children and staff, and craniosacral therapy with Katherine Williams, LMT. Dr. Bekah also was able to learn more about his digestive issues through a comprehensive digestive stool analysis which is generously provided to our families on a sliding scale basis by Genova Diagnostic Laboratories (previously known as Great Smokies Diagnostic Laboratories). With the help of staff nutritionist, Patty Carney, Dennis's foster mother was instructed on how to identify and remove casein and gluten from his diet. Dr. Bekah also recommended some nutritional supplementa-