



# THE TWENTY



*This Month: Reslove Behavioral Health Services,  
Special Education, Nonpublic School Services*

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Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

August 2010

## Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

### The Twenty for August

The school year has begun. Around IU 20 our school districts, as well as the IU, are prepared to welcome back students and to meet the challenges ahead. I don't think it is news that they are many and very complex. However, as I prepared for our Orientation Day for IU employees, I knew the message had to have a combination of reality check on fiscal and economic concerns but also a message of pride in our profession and what we do for kids and families.

To hundreds of IU staff on August 16, I shared with them what I believe we need to do this year in order to be successful. First, we need to stand together for kids and for our organization. Second, when the big people are dealing with big people (our unions and administration, e.g.) we need to focus on the big things. I asked staff to consider whether an issue is a "do or die" one before bringing it to administration. We have so many BIG challenges needing our attention that focusing on what in the scheme of things are not particularly pressing, is a poor use of our collective energy. Third, when dealing with students and families, we need to focus on the small things. Small things always matter, especially in serving children. Fourth, we need a positive ATTITUDE, because attitude determines how well we do things and a positive one means we will do "the right things right." Finally, I honestly said that if they gave 150% of themselves last year, we needed them to give 200% this year. That includes me and everyone. Our children deserve nothing less.

These are hard messages, but ones that I think will keep us focused on the right things for 2010-2011.

## Sand Tray Therapy Used During Summer Partial Hospitalization Program

BY NICOLE BAKER, LPC, BCBA

Sand tray therapy and creative story writing were used on a daily basis to help elementary children explore and resolve traumatic experiences during the Summer Partial Hospitalization Program held at the Colonial Academy. Sand tray therapy is an indirect, non-verbal intervention where children can explore and resolve trauma.

Children were asked to use miniature toys, placing them in the sand tray to create their stories. Pictures were taken and group members wrote creative stories about the pictures, putting images into words.

### ***Elementary Summer Partial Hospitalization Class Crocodile Story***

***This is a story about a crocodile.***

***There is a tornado everything is going to fall down and the crocodile said,***

***"we have to leave now!"***

***It was raining and the water got higher  
Everyone went and is in the school bus***

***The water was so high the city was going to flood  
That was when the school bus started to spin in the tornado and  
crocodile bit his nails***

***"What is going to happen?"***

***The sky is going to fall down and it could be the end of the world!!!!!!!***

***The crocodile said, "We all need to get into the water before we die"  
All of the sudden the tornado stopped and they lived happily ever after.***

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

For the 2009-10 school year, the special education department operated 96 classes in autistic support, life skills support, hearing support, multidisabilities support and physical support and served over 1000 students with disabilities in those classes. CIU 20 also provided related services including speech, vision, hearing, OT, and PT to over 3400 students.



*The sand tray pictured here goes along with Crocodile Story as students put the image into words.*

A traumatic event is a life experience that involves actual or perceived threats to the safety and well-being of an individual or to someone close to the individual. Traumatic life experiences can overwhelm a person's coping strategies, causing extreme emotional, psychological, and physiological distress (National Child Trauma Stress Network).

Creative arts interventions such as art, music, movement, story-telling, theater games, and sand tray therapy assist children in telling their stories that they may not be able to express verbally.

## More Act 89 Programs Find Homes Inside Nonpublic Schools

BY JANIE HECKER, Director of Auxiliary Services

From the mid 1970's to the early 1990's, CIU 20 operated 27 foot [Winnebago] mobile classrooms with Colonial Northampton Intermediate Unit 20 imprinted on the side. That was how instructional services were provided to the nonpublic schools because of a Supreme Court decision that did not allow public school employees to teach in religious based school buildings.

To save costs, the mobile classrooms were replaced with small trailers for the remedial staff and large trailers for the secondary guidance programs. Eventually, the Supreme Court reexamined the issue and held that, with certain safeguards in place, these programs could be offered inside the school buildings. Not only does this save operating costs but it adds instructional or guidance time because the student does not have to exit the building for services. It also fosters greater collaboration between the Act 89 personnel and the faculty and staff of the school. Secondary guidance counselor, John Musyt, reports increased use of services at Notre Dame High School in East Stroudsburg since the guidance program moved into that school several years ago.



Above is a photo showing a CIU 20 mobile classroom.

In the 2010-11 school-year, the guidance program at Notre Dame High School in Easton will move into a converted classroom that will serve as the guidance suite. The space will include an office for counselor Dan Damweber as well as counselor Paula Staples. Michelle Vail, the administrative assistant for the program, will have a reception/work area as you enter the suite. The remaining small office will be used by students, college representatives, and for other purposes.

At Our Lady of Perpetual Help, in Bethlehem Township, the Act 89 remedial program will find a new home in an area off the multi-purpose room. The school's principal, Mr. Harry Reese, found space on the stage that will be converted to a small classroom. It has been designed so that the classroom equipment can be moved out on the occasion that the stage is used. Remedial teacher, Diane Lazar, was thrilled that she would not have to endure another winter taking each group of children back and forth from the trailer outside the school.

Originally, there were four guidance trailers and fourteen instructional trailers. By the beginning of school, only two guidance trailers and six instructional trailers will remain.

## Resolve Receives Approval for a Therapeutic Autism Summer Camp

BY KEN SMITH, Treatment Coordinator

Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 and the Resolve Behavioral Health Services Department are proud to announce the recent approval from Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to provide a Summer Therapeutic Activities Program (STAP) to young children diagnosed on the Autism spectrum (four to 12 years of age). This program will closely resemble a summer camp, but will possess a strong treatment component in order to meet the behavioral and emotional needs of this unique population. Specifically, the program is designed for Autistic children who have been unsuccessful at traditional summer camps and who require a higher level of care in order to experience success within this type of environment.

CIU 20's STAP will service up to 24 children from Monroe, Northampton, and parts of Lehigh and Pike Counties, and will be housed at Colonial Academy located in Wind Gap, PA. The program is projected to begin in late June 2011 and will provide services three days per week for up to five weeks (six-hour treatment days). Specific dates are pending the 2010-11 school calendar and the related availability of Colonial Academy.

The review process for the STAP proposal was quite extensive and required the clinical approval from both the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Bureau of Autism Services. Each of these departments assigned a clinical reviewer who evaluated CIU 20's proposal in order to ensure all related interventions were clinically sound, evidenced-based, and individualized. CIU 20's STAP will have a total of 12 direct-care staff with varying levels of education ranging from Master's degrees to high school diplomas. All staff is required to have several years (3+ years) of experience working with the Autistic population and will receive extensive training and supervision through the STAP program. In addition, all direct-care staff will meet weekly with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, who will also provide onsite, client-specific, clinical consultation throughout the STAP treatment day.

All prospective STAP clients will follow CIU 20's traditional intake process, which involves a completed evaluation recommending the STAP program, Interagency Team Meeting summarizing treatment history and justification for STAP, and subsequent approval from DPW or local Managed Care Organization. CIU 20's STAP is funded through Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance (MA) Program and, as a result, all clients must first obtain the MA card prior to accessing treatment. CIU 20 can assist many families in this process if help is needed. Individuals interested in learning more about the new STAP program should contact the Resolve Department and Ken Smith (Treatment Coordinator) at 610-515-6469.

For more information concerning CIU-20 Programs and Services, visit our website at [www.ciu20.org](http://www.ciu20.org) or contact:

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## Students Experience Summer Fun and Learning at ESY 2010

BY BECKY ELLER, Supervisor of Special Education

This summer 241 students with special needs from Northampton and Monroe County school districts attended Colonial Intermediate Unit 20's Extended School Year Program (ESY). The number of students attending ESY increased from last year. This year's programs were held at two new locations, East Hills Middle School in Bethlehem Area School District as well as Pocono Mountain East Junior High School in the Pocono Mountain School District. The program ran from June 28, 2010 through July 22, 2010.

Summer fun and lots of learning were evident as always at this summer's program. Of the many interesting activities offered as part of the ESY Program, the students participated in cooking activities, literacy activities, water days, gym days, visits from therapy dogs, and even a visit from the ice cream truck. Throughout the ESY Program, the staff and students worked together to make the summer ESY program a great experience for all involved.

ESY is a special education program provided beyond the regular 180 day school year to children with disabilities in order to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). All students with disabilities must be considered annually for ESY programming. The program is designed to assist students with special needs in maintaining skills or behaviors relevant to goals that were addressed as a part of their Individual Education Program (IEP).



*Matthew Ojedis (Bangor Area School District) and Aiza Waseem (Easton Area School District) enjoyed ice cream treats during the Extended School Year Program at East Hills Middle School.*

## Resolve Behavioral Health Services Rolls Out ACT and ACT II Pilot Programs

BY DR. JANICE CUNNINGHAM, Director of Resolve Behavioral Health Services

Two exciting new programs will be debuting at Colonial Academy for the 2010-2011 school year. Colonial intermediate Unit 20 will be rolling out its cyber-based education via the Blended Schools curriculum for both of these programs. The first program, ACT (Academics-Career-Technology), will replace the current Alternative Education site at Career Institute of Technology (CIT). Alternative Education students who utilize CIT from Easton, Pen Argyl, Wilson, Nazareth, and Bangor school districts will be relocated to an unused wing at the Academy, receiving their instruction via technology. Their current teacher will also be in the classroom helping to facilitate. They will continue to receive their career instruction at CIT for the remainder of their school day.

The second program, ACT II, was developed at the expressed need of districts that CIU 20 serves. The program was developed in response to the need for temporary placements for students who have been expelled or suspended from their regular classroom from 10 days to one full year. These are students whose infractions do not currently meet the criteria for placement at Colonial Academy. Typical infractions may include first time offenders of the district's "zero tolerance" policy when there has been a determination that the nature of the violation was non-violent intent or accidental in nature. This will be a full-day program with the curriculum delivered, again, via Blended Schools, with a mental health worker to support the counseling component and teaching support provided from the ACT teacher. Students will have full access to and receive all other benefits currently offered to students who attend Colonial Academy.

CIU 20 is very excited about these pilot programs and looks forward to providing to our districts a low-cost alternative for difficult-to-place students while giving them a high-quality education and keeping them engaged in school.

## Northampton County Juvenile Justice Center Expands

BY SANDIE BINCZAK, Supervisor of Special Education/Alternative Education

There is excitement at the Northampton Juvenile Justice Center located at 650 Ferry Street in Easton, due to the expansion of the facility and the opening of new residential quarters. The Center serves students from Northampton, Lehigh, and Monroe Counties who are between the ages of 14 and 18 years old. These students are court-ordered to the juvenile program due to various infractions in the community and/or school systems. There are currently five residential quarters that are called pods. Each pod contains a maximum of 12 students. Sixty students are the maximum the Center can house at any one time. Now, the Center is opening two new pods. Each pod will contain a maximum of 12 students and, therefore, the total for the Center could reach a new maximum number of 84 student residents.

Presently, the Center is running two different programs within its walls. The Detention program consists of two classrooms, and the Treatment program consists of three classrooms (Male Treatment, Forensic, and STOP [Short Term Offender Program]). Plans include the addition of a new Female Treatment pod and another Detention pod. This will impact Colonial IU 20, who provides the educational services on behalf of Easton Area School District. CIU 20 serves both regular education and special education students who are at the facility. The IU hires, trains, and supervises teachers, and also provides educational supplies and equipment to meet the needs of the students. The County is responsible for the treatment/counseling to all students on an as-needed basis. As the numbers grow in August, the IU will be assigning new teachers to the Center in order to deliver appropriate education for all students. The County will also be adding more counselors and Youth Care Workers as needed. The IU supervisor and the Center's director and supervisors are collaborating to insure that all goes smoothly for the beginning of the new school year.

## Psychologists Help Revise Screening/ Evaluation Process for Gifted Students

BY MARILYN HERWIG, School Psychologist

For the past year, school psychologists assigned to East Stroudsburg Area School District worked with the district's Gifted Committee to revise and refine screening/evaluation procedures for students thought to be mentally gifted. The district and psychologists ensured that the current evaluation procedures met the revised PA guidelines for gifted education.

Several psychologists met with the committee and reviewed current procedures. The psychologists then met as a group during the summer to revise the parent and teacher input forms. The forms were revised to match the requirements of gifted written reports and develop a standardized report format. This group also developed a parent handout on what being gifted means in terms of educational programming and training materials for regular education teachers to aid in identification of possible students for screening.

The school psychologists strongly encouraged the district to return to a universal screening program to locate students who not only might be in need of gifted support services, but who might need special education services due to academic or cognitive delays. The district accepted all of the psychologists' suggestions. The Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) was subsequently administered to all second grade students in the district. Two school psychologists then met with the administrators and counselors to review the results of the OLSAT and made suggestions for follow up screening of all students scoring significantly above and below the mean.

## T.I.P. Night—Transition Information for Parents

BY SEAN LeDONNE, Supervisor of Special Education

On April 27, 2010, CIU 20 sponsored a T.I.P. night at the Colonial Academy to provide information on available options for students after High School.. This free event provided additional transition information, answered questions and gave opportunities for networking between parents and service providers.

Transition involves a coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities that promotes movement from high school to post-school life. Transition planning involves a partnership between the student, the family, school-age services and program providers, post-school services and program providers and local community members. Effective transition involves purposeful planning among all these entities, recognizing the student's current strengths, interests and needs, and then identifying what services and supports the student will need to achieve future success. Post school outcomes include higher education, employment, independent living and community participation.

Parents were given the opportunity to talk with participating agency representatives throughout the evening and to listen to presentations on transition topics. The agencies were able to share information about their services as well as answer directly any questions.

CIU 20 hopes to make this an annual spring event. Watch for upcoming announcements!

*Revolutionary Thinking . . . Makes A Difference*



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*For information regarding this statement, or special accommodations, please contact Mr. Anthony Pidgeon, Director of Human Resources and Research Services, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, 6 Danforth Drive, Easton, PA 18045-7899, (610) 252-5550, TDD/TTY Hearing Impaired (610) 252-3786.*