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Achievement Academy, Inc.

APPLAUSE!



Christmas Past... A Rich History of Giving

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HOLIDAY EDITION

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Ledger photos from 1966. Junior Welfare League's annual Holiday Charity Ball helped support the work at the Achievement Academy, then known as United Cerebral Palsy.



Holidays at the Achievement Academy have a rich history that dates back all the way to the 1950's. Fundraisers like the Junior Welfare League's Charity Ball took place to raise funds to build a new facility for the United Cerebral Palsy Center. This was one of the community's largest, most attended events and had wide spread media coverage. At that time we were in just a small building on Lakeland Hills Blvd. and it took a community to come together to build a larger facility. A Building Committee consisting of John R. Phillips, Floyd Bowen, James M. Wellman, Scott Linder, D. Burke Kibler III, Homer Hooks, Lawton Chiles, Jack Pridgen, Maywood Chesson, James Sikes and George

Jenkins helped make this dream a reality. In 1967, the UCP Center at 716 East Bella Vista Street was completed. Once the building was built, the Junior Welfare League members also served as receptionists and clerical workers and began giving tours of the facility.

To the people who've been a part of the rich holiday giving tradition at Achievement Academy we say **"Thank You."** Because the community has recognized the value of what we do, Achievement Academy has helped thousands of children with special needs to reach their full potential.

We look forward to many more years of partnership with this great community!

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." -Winston Churchill



09-10 Board Members

President

Randy Hollen

Immediate Past President

Janice Jones

1st Vice President

Adam Airth

2nd Vice President

Michael Peoples

Secretary

Mark Miller

Treasurer

John Scott

Members

Elizabeth Bandyk
Casey Compton
Steve Earley
George Flack
Kristie Hatcher-Bolin
Jeanne Hebert
Gilit Kontny
Lynette Mitchell
Tony Turbeville
Luis Unda
Jason Wozniak

Thank You

**Lighthouse
Ministries
and
Save-A-Lot**

and
**Butch Durrance
and Friends**

For your generous partnership
throughout the holiday season!

Congratulations

Gilit Kontny

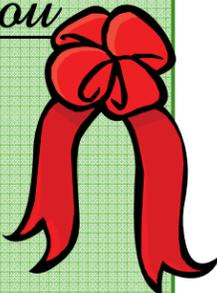
New Board Member

Jodi Frisby

Nominee for Teacher of the Year

Mary Holjes

Nominee for Non-Instructional
Employee of the Year



Dates to Remember:

Winter Break

December 18 thru January 4

Executive Committee Mtg.
Wednesday, Jan. 13, 11:30am

Annual Pigeon Pull & RoundUp
Saturday, Jan. 16

Holiday
Monday, Jan. 18

Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 19, 6:00pm

Student Holiday
Monday, Jan. 25

Executive Committee Mtg.
Wednesday, Feb. 10, 11:30am

**Bartow Junior Service League
5K Run**
Saturday, Feb. 13

Holiday
Monday, Feb. 15

Board Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 16

**COMING
SOON!**

**4th Annual
Pigeon Pull
and Evening
Round-Up Party**

**Saturday, January 16
Higgenbotham Ranch**

Contact Stacy Williams, Mktg.
Department 863-683-6504
for more information.

Don't forget to
check out our website
www.achievementacademy.com

Christmas Today... As Magical as Ever

The holiday is brighter than ever in the hearts of students at Achievement Academy because of the generosity given by our community. Our students and their families have received much holiday assistance from Save-A-Lot, Zachry Const. Corp., Lighthouse Ministries, Grove Park Christian Church and many individuals who know what the true spirit of the season is.

As we look forward to the future and a new year our goal is to help more children with special needs in our community. We have children

waiting – families waiting – waiting for an opportunity to have the service that will give them a chance to succeed. We currently have over 50 children on the waiting list and we can help them if we just had the space. Times are tough economically and many have said, “Why won’t you just wait to build a new school when the economy picks up”. Just read the letter on the next page “A Mom’s Hope” and ask yourself doesn’t every child and family deserve the opportunity for hope?



Parties and gift deliveries make the holidays bright for volunteers and children alike.



KAIA... A Mom's Hope

by Ansley Henderson

Kaia was born 5 weeks premature. After a month-long stay in the NICU at LRMC, we brought her home and assumed she would have a slight developmental delay based on being born premature. However, she soon began to demonstrate strange behavior. Her body would jerk and her eyes would flutter or fixate on objects that weren't there. Our pediatrician referred us to a neurologist and at 6 months old, Kaia was diagnosed with severe epilepsy. At 15 months old, she had open heart surgery to repair a large hole in her heart. She healed quickly and has had no cardiac problems since. However, Kaia's seizures got worse over time. At their worst, she would have hundreds of seizures a day. In 2008 Kaia had a Vegas Nerve Stimulator implanted into her chest to help manage her seizures. With a combination of the implant and daily medications, her seizures are finally under control.

Three years ago, Kaia started attending the Achievement Academy. She was very weak and could not communicate at all. She was completely dependent on others for even the most basic needs. Since that very first week, Kaia has received weekly physical, speech and occupational therapy. Now, three years later, she is nothing like the child she used to be. Because of the dedication and work from everyone at the school, Kaia is now able to sit up, crawl, help with her feedings and even pull up into a standing position.



The staff at Achievement Academy works tirelessly to make sure each student gets all the help they need in order to succeed. Because of the persistence from her therapists, Shriners Hospital has given Kaia a new wheel chair and she will also receive a new set of leg braces every six months until she is 18 years old. With those braces Kaia is now able to take steps in a walker! *This gives me hope that one day she will be able to walk beside me holding my hand.*

The support from Achievement Academy extends far beyond the classroom right into our home and family. Kaia has been hospitalized many times, and as a result, I had to quit my job to help care for her. The staff at Achievement Academy took action to help. They nominated us for The Newspaper With A Heart Program with The Lakeland Ledger. We were accepted and Kaia's story made front

page news. Through the donations from the public, our rent, car payments and utilities were all paid for two months. We also received a new stroller, car seat, gifts and food for Christmas dinner. All of this made that Christmas a holiday our family will never forget!

Today Kaia can respond to the sound of my voice, she kisses her daddy on the cheek and she can wrap her arms around us to show affection. I know in my heart, she never would have been able to do this if it were not for the help she has received from the Achievement Academy.

Everyone knows that the children at Achievement Academy are special, but they are not the only ones. Every teacher, therapist, secretary and volunteer are just as special. They are all miracle workers. Every time Kaia reaches a new goal, they celebrate with us just like a family. So, I want to say **THANK YOU** to everyone at Achievement Academy for giving Kaia all the special attention and love she needs to be as strong, healthy and happy as she is today.

A Don't Miss Event...

31st Annual PRO-AM Tennis Tournament

Coming March 12-14, 2010

For more information contact Stacy Williams, Marketing Dept., 863-683-6504



A Pediatrician's Thoughts

by Dr. Donna Bhisitkul-Henricks

I had the pleasure of touring Achievement Academy last summer. Working as a Pediatrician in our community for the last 13 years, I have been involved with many children with varying abilities. I was overwhelmed with the education and therapy that was available at Achievement Academy. The dedication of the staff, and their commitment to providing all children the possibility of reaching their full potential was apparent even during my short visit.

Parents with children with varying abilities typically have difficulty coping with the uncertainty of the future of their children and their families. The staff at Achievement Academy makes home visits to these families during early infancy and educates them, assists them with setting up therapies, and most importantly offers them more control of their lives and hope for their future. At 18 months, children are eligible for enrollment at Achievement Academy and receive individualized educational plans with physical, speech, and

occupational therapy at the center. Early intervention makes a significant difference on the ultimate development of these children. Achievement Academy recognizes this and maximizes their potential for future socialization and development.

As a Pediatrician and most importantly a parent of three children, I am extremely proud to support and be involved with Achievement Academy and recognize the importance of this organization for the future development of the children in our community.

Achievement Academy

Your holiday gift will make a big difference for a child with special needs.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Donations may be made by check, credit card or billed. Visa or MasterCard

Card # _____

Exp. Date: _____

CCV#: _____

Amt. Enclosed: _____

Please Bill: _____

I pledge at the following giving level:

____ \$1,000 + Visionary ____ \$999-500 Inspiration ____ \$499-250 Discover

____ \$249-100 Exploration ____ \$99-1 Foundation

Please complete this form and return with your donation to: Achievement Academy, 716 E. Bella Vista Street, Lakeland, FL 33805

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Happy Holidays to our amazing Capital Campaign Advisory Board. Your gifts will go on long after the holidays have ended.