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Dates to Remember

Last Day of School for Students

Friday, June 2nd

Student Orientation Day (All Campuses)

Wednesday, August 9th

First Day of School for Students

Thursday, August 10th

(Holiday) Labor Day

Monday, September 4th



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Spring 2017

APPLAUSE!

"MY-chievement Academy"



Grace is the first one out to the playground!

Although they have four grown children of their own, Tonie and her husband, Mike, have always felt led to foster children in need of a loving home. For the last seven years they have fostered numerous children, but said they would never adopt. That is, until they met Grace.

A few days before Christmas, 2012, Tonie received a call about a newborn that needed a foster home. She weighed just four pounds and suffered from brain damage as a result of her birth mother's drug abuse during pregnancy. That, along with an absence of prenatal care, made it impossible for doctors to determine just how premature she was. Tonie and Mike welcomed this baby girl into their home when she was just three days old. They named her Grace.

When Grace was about four months old, the family was referred to Achievement Academy's Birth to Three Program. Early Interventionist, Laurie Turner, began monthly home-based visits to provide early intervention services to help Grace's development. Tonie was astonished by what she learned about a child's development in the first couple months of life. Grace's tight muscle tone from the substance exposure hindered her gross motor skills. Laurie modeled infant massage as a means to help calm Grace and encourage her body to relax. Laurie credits Grace's success in reaching her developmental goals to the follow-through by the parents on suggested activities for development.

When Grace was about six months old, a doctor told Tonie that Grace would always walk with a limp and never be able to run. Tonie said those words have stuck with her to this day. She still remembers Laurie's response when she shared the doctor's news. "We are going to maximize Grace's potential", Laurie said. Tonie said every developmental milestone Grace worked toward felt like a marathon, but achieving each one was like winning a gold medal. When Grace was able to be adopted at six months old, Tonie and Mike knew they couldn't let her go. Her adoption became official just a few months later.

At 2 ½ years old, Grace transitioned into Achievement Academy's Charter School, Winter Haven Campus. At first, her social skills were poor; she did not interact with her peers and was very timid playing on the playground due to her delayed gross motor skills. Today, in her second year, Grace is more social and actively engages with her peers. Her gross motor skills have also improved greatly through the one-on-one individual physical therapy she receives at school. She is now the first one out to the playground and loves to run and jump on the merry-go-round. Her cognitive skills have also progressed from sorting and basic skills to sequencing pictures to make a story along with identifying and tracing letters and shapes.

"The collaboration between the Birth to Three Program, her therapies at school and Tonie and Mike carrying out those things at home have been integral in getting her where she is today," said Robyn, Grace's teacher.

Tonie said the Achievement Academy staff have all helped tremendously in every aspect of Grace's life. "The staff goes above and beyond in such a caring way, not just for the child but also for the parent. I can see the love and care they have for Grace and how excited they are to tell me about her accomplishments".

Grace coined a phrase when she was learning to say "Achievement Academy" that has stuck to this day. **She calls it "MY-chievement Academy"**. Grace is graduating this spring from Achievement Academy and will be going to a mainstream VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) daycare next school year. "Grace is our little miracle story," said Tonie. "I couldn't have done it without the help and support of Achievement Academy."



Grace loves the merry-go-round!



Thank You!

To the following community partners

CertiPay - United Way Day of Caring

CPS Investment Advisors - United Way Day of Caring

Fish City Grill

Florida Chapter Club Managers Assoc. of America

Gatorland

George C. Forsythe Family Foundation

Goody Two Shoes, Inc.

Harper Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.

J. Burns Pizza Shop

A Gift Honoring the Legacy of George Jenkins

Lakeland Area Chamber Foundation, Inc.

Lakeland Electric

Publix Super Markets Loss Prevention /
Risk Management Dept - United Way Day of Caring

Publix Super Markets Charities

Rodda Construction

The Libertore Fund for Children, Inc.

Lasting Impacts: Judah's Story



Judah's graduation from Achievement Academy

"How do you articulate your gratitude to a team of people that have been so life changing to your family? I am not sure, but I will try. We started taking Judah to Achievement Academy almost two years ago and it has been one of the best decisions that we have ever made.

Two years ago, we were tired and hopeless regarding Judah's situation. Judah seemed to be in a rut and we didn't know what to do. Judah had no feeding skills, his social skills were lacking and he was making no progress in his ability to stand. Fast forward two years and now- Judah holds his spoon and is able to feed himself with assistance. Judah has also gained enough strength to stand in his stander for 30-60 minutes. Judah's vocabulary has increased, he is happier and he constantly asks to go to "class".

While our time at Achievement Academy has come to a close because of a move up to Minnesota, our gratitude will carry on forever. Thank you!!" ~ Chad, Judah's Dad

Donor Spotlight: The Libertore Fund for Children A Note from Lana Swartzwelder, CEO



Lana Swartzwelder, CEO
The Libertore Fund
for Children

The Libertore Fund for Children's mission is to make a difference in the lives of at-risk children, eliminating barriers to their success so they can realize a brighter future. We know from research that early intervention for at-risk infants and toddlers, when the brain is most capable of change, will have the greatest long-term impact in creating that future. We seek out agencies that have the same mission and vision and spend time meeting with the staff and learning about the programs first-hand.

When we met with the staff at The Achievement Academy Charter School, we knew we had found the perfect partner. They are committed to creating a brighter future for children, up to five years of age, with special needs. They provide early intervention through support, therapy and education, and advocacy and resources for parents, teachers and children. They offer effective and accountable programs, operate a cost-efficient and transparent agency and employ certified, professional teachers, therapists, and staff that are patient, caring and committed to helping the children reach their potential.

~ Lana Swartzwelder, Chief Executive Officer

[Editor's Note: Lana Swartzwelder is a life-long educator with an MS in Early Childhood Education and an M. Ed. in Educational Leadership. She is the former principal of St. Joseph's Academy in Lakeland.]

Staff Spotlight



Two of our staff members were nominated by their colleagues to represent Achievement Academy at an awards ceremony held on April 24, 2017 for charter schools in Polk County.

Missy Kopp, Lakeland teacher, was honored as our Teacher of the Year and Rebecca Lidle, ParaProfessional, was honored as our Support Person of the Year. In achieving these awards, their dedication and

commitment to students and families and their desire to "go above and beyond" with such optimistic attitudes is both recognized and celebrated.



L to R - Rebecca Lidle, Missy Kopp

Did you know . . . Achievement Academy Charter School has three campuses? In addition to our main campus in Lakeland (716 E. Bella Vista Street, Lakeland, FL 33805), we also have a campus in Winter Haven (2211 28th Street NW, Winter Haven, FL 33880) and Bartow (695 E. Summerliin Street, Bartow, FL 33830).

~ Our Mission ~

Assist children with special needs to reach their maximum potential
by providing quality education, therapy and family support.

Top Chef of Polk County 2017 — A Huge Success!

. . . And the WINNERS are . . .

Professional Judges Awards

Top Chef of Polk County 2017
Chef Chris Worley, Terrie Lobb Catering

Best Appetizer
Chef Matt Fulwood, Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens

Best Entrée
Chef Wayne Haggard, Spectra / The Lakeland Center

Best Dessert
Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina

Media Judges Awards

Media's Choice, Top Chef (Tie)
Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos
Chef Chris Worley, Terrie Lobb Catering

Media's Choice, Best Appetizer
Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina

Media's Choice, Best Entrée
Chef Chris Worley, Terrie Lobb Catering

Media's Choice, Best Dessert
Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos

Top Philanthropic Award
Chef Matt Fulwood, Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens

People's Choice, Top Table Décor
Chef Matt Fulwood, Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens

Special thanks to the Judges, Supper Club Hosts and Volunteers



A Special Thank You To . . .

Participating Chefs

Tina Calhoon, Frescos
Jeff Conley, Publix Aprons Cooking School
Marcos Fernandez, Nineteen61
Matt Fulwood, Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens
Wayne Haggard, Spectra / The Lakeland Center
Victor Kendlehart, SottoTerra at Streamsong
James Lazaros, La Flor de Espana
Patrick Schaefer, Patio850
Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina
Lea Williams, Got Candy & More
Chris Worley, Terrie Lobb Catering

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Holland & Knight, Summit Consulting,
The Libertore Fund for Children, Inc., Two Men and a Truck

In-Kind Sponsor
Abuelo's, Central Florida's Big 4 Radio,
Central Food Equipment, The Ledger Media Group



L to R—Winner of Top Chef of Polk County 2017, Chef Chris Worley
pictured with Terrie Lobb

Congratulations to our 48 graduates from all three
campuses - Lakeland, Winter Haven and Bartow!



You are all stars and we are so proud of you!