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863-683-6504

www.AchievementAcademy.com

John Burton, Executive Director

Cindi Parker-Pearson, Principal

Interested in taking a
tour of our campus?
Please call 863-683-6504 to
schedule an appointment.



Lasting Impacts: Ta'Niya's Story



Ta'Niya and her teacher, Ms. Susan

Ta'Niya was born in July 2010, a healthy full-term baby. At four months old, Ta'Niya's mom, Kanika, noticed she wasn't rolling over, holding her head up, or holding her bottle like most babies do at that age. "I notified her pediatrician because I knew something wasn't right," Kanika said. Over the next few months, she took Ta'Niya to several different physicians looking for answers.

In April 2011, doctors concluded that her head growth was not within normal limits and was growing too rapidly for her age. After an emergency MRI and an appointment with a neurologist, it was determined that she had excessive amounts of cerebrospinal fluid around her brain and all four ventricles were blocked with fluid. Ta'Niya had surgery the next morning to have a ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunt placed to relieve pressure from her brain caused by the fluid accumulation. "That was the scariest thing I have ever experienced," Kanika said. "She was only nine months old and having brain surgery." Ta'Niya came out of surgery rolling over right away, which is something she had never been able to do prior to surgery.

Another hurdle came when Ta'Niya was three years old. At her very first visit to Shriners Hospital for Children, they were told that Ta'Niya possibly had cerebral palsy and that she would never be able to walk because the bones in her ankles were deteriorating. The medical team at Shriners recommended that they break both of her ankles and reset them. Kanika did not want Ta'Niya to have to go through another surgery and sought out another option. Ta'Niya soon received bilateral DAFOs (Dynamic Ankle Foot Orthotics) to assist with balance, coordination and body symmetry.

Ta'Niya was referred to the Achievement Academy charter school in August 2013 when she was three years old to help with her developmental delays. She started out using a walker but through physical therapy and assistive equipment, Ta'Niya is now walking independently, skipping, doing jumping jacks — and no longer needs surgery! Ta'Niya is highly motivated to be mobile and doesn't allow her motor difficulties to stop her from accessing the school environment. "What she has overcome since starting Achievement Academy is just remarkable," says Ta'Niya's mom.

Ta'Niya's teacher for the past two years at Achievement Academy has been Susan Shipe. Ms. Susan said that at first she was hesitant about recommending mainstream kindergarten for Ta'Niya, but by the end of last year she knew she could make it. "I'm impressed Ta'Niya has done so well. I watched her growth last year and decided we needed to push her even harder," Ms. Susan said. "Ta'Niya is challenged in every aspect physically, socially and mentally at Achievement Academy. Ta'Niya's determination and confidence have helped her succeed. She doesn't realize she has any limitations."

This Fall, Ta'Niya will begin kindergarten in a mainstream class. Kanika is so thankful for Achievement Academy and how it has helped Ta'Niya with her development. Wanting to "pay it forward," Kanika recently made a donation to the school to purchase a Kindle with all its accessories for Ta'Niya's classroom. "Everyone at Achievement Academy has gone above and beyond and it is greatly appreciated," Kanika said. "I'm just completely satisfied with the advancement she's made. It's because of Achievement Academy that she's where she is today."

If you would like to share your personal story of how Achievement Academy has helped you, please contact:

*Stacy Williams at 863-683-6504
or Stacy@AchievementAcademy.com.*



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Thank You!

To the following donors and
community partners . . .

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Libertore Fund for Children

Pepsi Cola Bottling Company

Vogel Brothers / United Way Day of Caring

Dates to Remember

Last Day of School for Students
Thursday, June 9, 2016

Executive Committee Meeting
Monday, June 13, 2016

LEGOLAND Field Trip
Thursday, June 16, 2016

Student Orientation Day
(All Campuses)
Friday, August 12, 2016

First Day of School for Students
(All Campuses)
Monday, August 15, 2016

Wishlist

Did you know . . . Achievement Academy has a Wish List? Items on the wish list are hand-selected by our teachers and therapists to help students reach their developmental goals. For more information, please visit our website and click on the "Wish List" button.



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Lasting Impacts: Katie's Story

My daughter, Katie, has been connected to the Achievement Academy since before she was born. You see, I was a teacher in one of our Lakeland classrooms and, when I became pregnant, everyone at the school was excited for Katie to arrive. In fact, Katie was going to be featured in a video for the physical therapy department showing typical reflexes and development of an infant. In November 2006, Katie made her appearance in a typical birth with no issues. She was full-term; everything seemed fine.

Just a few days after her birth, Katie began wheezing and sounding congested and we thought she had a cold. I brought her in to be video-taped by the Physical Therapy/Birth to Three departments and one of the physical therapists immediately noticed that Katie was not having the typical reflexes right after birth. I took her back to the pediatrician and he confirmed that she had a heart murmur but assured us that many children have them and made an appointment for a cardiologist.

At 17 days old, we discovered that Katie had an enlarged heart and was in congestive heart failure. She was rushed to the Pediatric ICU in Lakeland and treatment began. At 11 weeks old, she had open heart surgery to repair the holes that were causing such stress to her body. She was 5 pounds at 11 weeks old, weak and frail. Upon returning home, she immediately became enrolled with Achievement Academy's Birth to Three Program and later attended the charter school for several years receiving physical and speech therapy along with wonderful educational instruction for her developmental delays.



Katie at 3 years

Today, Katie is in 3rd grade and is in the STEM program which is academically accelerated curriculum. She was one of only seven students in 2nd grade to receive all A's for the entire school year and, in fact, has received all A's since Kindergarten. She was dismissed from the speech program for Polk County Schools during her 1st grade school year. She still has vision and hearing issues that she will deal with her whole life and needs monitoring by a cardiologist but we are so incredibly proud of how far she has come.



Katie Today — Ready for patrol!

Katie is blessed to come from a loving home with supportive people in her life to push her to succeed but that alone is not what has built this success story. Achievement Academy made the difference for our little girl. The time and attention given to her over the years by the early interventionists, teachers and therapists have brought her to where she is today. Had Achievement Academy not been a part of our lives, I know that Katie would not be where she is today. Our lives have forever been changed by this amazing organization and our community is stronger because of their work to make children's lives better.

Submitted by Katie's mom, Stephanie

Board Member Spotlight: Mike Brossart

Mike Brossart joined the Board in the Fall of 2015. This came as a result of Mike's tour of Achievement Academy with Leadership Lakeland Class XXXII earlier in the year. Mike was so moved by the number of success stories with the children and their families that as he boarded the bus to leave the facility, he asked John Burton, Executive Director, to allow him to get involved with the program. In addition to serving as a board member, Mike is also the Board Treasurer.

Mike grew up in Lakeland and feels fortunate to work as the Finance Director for the City of Lakeland. "What a great opportunity it is to live and work in such a special community where so many people know and care about others' well-being. As a board member I look forward to helping however I can to ensure that every teacher, para-professional, therapist, early interventionist and administrator has the tools and resources they need to reach their goals of helping each child achieve their maximum potential."



Mike Brossart

Thank You and Recognitions

2016 Top Chef of Polk County

Thank You To . . .

Participating Chefs

- Chef Steve Beltz, Grasslands Golf & Country Club
- Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos
- Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos Whisky Green at The Heights
- Chef Marcos Fernandez, Nineteen 61
- Chef Terry Gracie, Publix Aprons Cooking School
- Chef Wayne Haggard, Ovations Food Services
- Chef Chris Worley, Terrie Lobb Catering
- Chef Ronald Mayer, Florida Presbyterian Homes
- Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina
- Chef Chad Ward, Whiskey Bent BBQ

Master Chef Sponsor

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In Memory of Dale Olinger - God Bless - The Olinger Family
Joe & Carolyn Morrell
Lock Insurance
Scott Kontny - Geneva Financial Group
Summit Consulting
Tampa Electric / People's Gas

2016 Top Chef of Polk County, Continued

And the Winners Are . . .

Professional Chef Awards

Top Chef of Polk County 2016:
Chef Ronald Mayer, Florida Presbyterian Homes
Best Appetizer: Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos
Best Entrée: Chef Marcos Fernandez, Nineteen61
Best Dessert: Chef Steve Beltz, Grasslands Golf & Country Club

Media Awards

Top Chef: Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina
Best Appetizer: Chef Steve Beltz, Grasslands Golf & Country Club
Best Entrée: Chef Marcos Fernandez, Nineteen61
Best Dessert: Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina

Top Philanthropic Award

Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos & Frescos Whisky Green at the Heights

Top Table Décor (People's Choice)

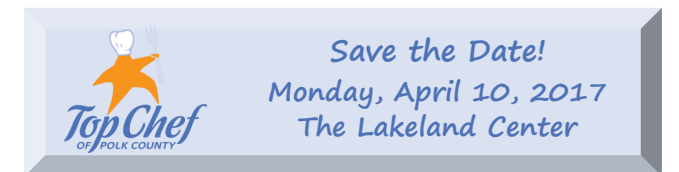
Chef Chad Ward, Whiskey Bent BBQ

Judges: Professional Chef Panel

Chef Rene Marquis
Chef Michael Moench
Chef Adam Walkover

Judges: Media Panel

Nancy Cattarius, Hall Communications
Wes Craven, Foodie Magazine
Kevin Drake, The Ledger



Two Achievement Academy staff members were nominated by their colleagues to represent Achievement Academy at an awards ceremony that was held March 14, 2016 for charter schools in Polk County.

Monica Franklin, Lakeland teacher, was honored as our Teacher of the Year and Laurie Turner, Early Interventionist and School Nurse, was honored as our Support Person of the Year.

Out of 18 charter schools that were represented, Laurie was the 1st Runner-Up for overall Support Person of the Year for our entire district charter schools! Congratulations to both of these ladies who we are so proud and fortunate to have as part of our Achievement Academy family!



L-R: Monica Franklin and Laurie Turner, RN