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FALL 2021

Special Beginnings...Brighter Futures

APPLAUSE!

It Takes a Village.

"We are grateful that Achievement Academy has been a part of our village!"

- Coleen, Allesandro's Mom

Lasting Impressions: Allesandro's Story

Allesandro is what many would describe as a typical teenager, who enjoys all things related to science, video games, and chess. He is a bright student who graduated with honors from Lakeland Senior High School before continuing his studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), where he recently returned for the start of his sophomore year.

However, 20 years ago, his parents feared this future for Allesandro may never be possible. In November 2001, Allesandro entered the world at just 35 weeks and was diagnosed with a Grade III Intraventricular Hemorrhage (IVH). He was airlifted from Bartow Regional Medical Center to Lakeland Regional Health, where he spent several weeks in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Infants who develop a hemorrhage in the brain at birth have a greatly increased chance that their development skills will be compromised. Those weeks were a frightening time for parents, Coleen and Guy, as they watched their baby fight.

Doctors advised Allesandro's parents that he would suffer from cerebral palsy and may never gain the ability to

walk, feed himself, or complete other basic functions. For first-time parents, this kind of news was devastating as they reframed their expectations and dreams for their child. Fortunately, Allesandro was referred to our Birth to Three program when he was just a few months old, which changed the course of his development.



Becky Jacklin, an Early Interventionist with our Birth to Three program, began working with Allesandro and his parents to provide in-home early intervention services designed to help him gain the skills needed to reach his developmental milestones. Because of the damage the hemorrhage caused to his brain, Allesandro needed help learning what often comes naturally to other children. Becky worked with him through tummy time, helped him learn to roll over and sit up, and practiced bringing his hands to mid-line.

Another effect of the damage was Allesandro's brain had "forgotten" he had a left side, so he had to retrain his brain to use that side of his body. Becky advised Coleen to use large or oversized toys when playing with her

baby, which would require him to use two hands to pick up and carry. This helped him remember to use his left side. In addition to gaining physical skills, Allesandro had a profound hearing loss that he had to learn to accommodate while making strides in his developmental goals.

The impact of these early intervention services helped change the trajectory of Allesandro's early childhood and prepared him for success as he continued his journey through Pre-Kindergarten, his primary education, and off to college at RIT, where he earned a place on the Dean's List his first year. The academic success he has achieved is leaps and bounds from what his earliest physicians predicted would be possible.

Today, Coleen shares how thankful she is to Becky and the services she provided to Allesandro, helping lay his foundation for learning. "We have always said that 'it takes a village', and we are grateful that Achievement Academy has been a part of our village!"



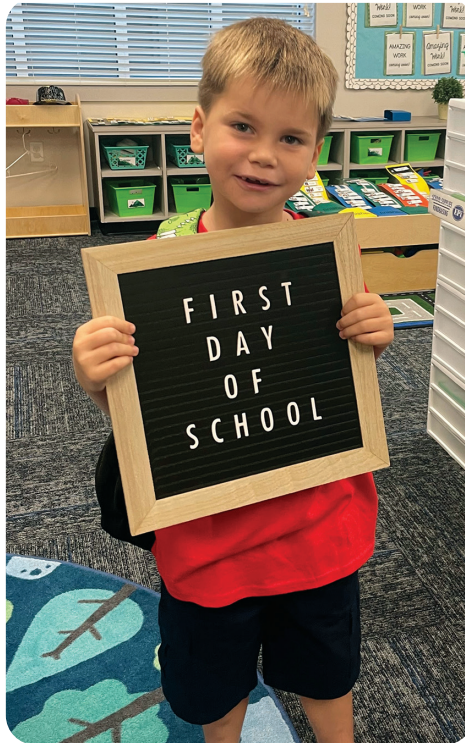
Partners In Hope.

Paying It Forward

By: Kelsey and Nolan (Beckett's Parents)

Our son, Beckett, was enrolled at Achievement Academy when he was four years old. He struggled with a speech impediment, language acquisition delay, and his fine motor skills were not on track for his age. Beckett struggled to express his needs or do things independently, like feeding or dressing himself. With the help of his dedicated teachers and therapists, he was able to achieve his goals. He is now able to communicate his wants and needs, no longer has a speech impediment, can button and unbutton his clothes, and put on his own socks and shoes. Achievement Academy gave Beckett his voice and jumpstarted his independence.

Without the love, expertise, and dedication of the staff at Achievement Academy, Beckett's outstanding



progress in just two years would not have been possible. We are grateful and could never repay the gift Achievement Academy gave our family, and we want to do our part to ensure that future families have the same opportunity. We give through the monthly giving program "Partners in Hope" because we have seen firsthand how Achievement Academy utilizes their donations. They have specialized equipment, the best staff, and everything is working towards the goal of giving children with special needs the best possible future. We like knowing that our donation is positively impacting children in our community.

We invite you to join us in setting up a monthly gift online. Visit AchievementAcademy.com & click on the "Donate" button to become a Partner in Hope today!

Innovative Equipment.

Tools For Success

Equipment that enables a child to feel a sense of independence is vital to their development. For example, being able to play with their classmates and eat lunch around a table allows children to see the world from a new perspective. We are fortunate to have a variety of therapy equipment at each campus to give our students the essential help they need to master daily tasks.



A great example of our therapy equipment is Firefly's GoTo Seat, an important device used to assist children who need additional support to sit upright on their own. The GoTo Seat gives the child

additional independence, and is used in therapy and in the classroom to provide children with postural support and head control. The GoTo Seat can be placed in the bumper car in our physical therapy room to assist a child with mobility, or attached to the swing as they work with their therapist to master motor skills.

This specialized equipment helps our students develop independence, confidence, and master skills to achieve their individual goals. We are thankful to our generous donors who help make it possible to add therapy equipment at all campuses!



Our Hero.

Laurie Turner: A Healthcare Hero

Congratulations to Laurie Turner, RN, who was recently honored as a Healthcare Hero in recognition for her tireless work to implement the school's safe return to in-person instruction. Laurie has been a member of the Achievement Academy family since 1997 and has worked in both our Charter school and Birth to Three programs.

In Laurie Turner's nomination, her unwavering dedication to developing the school's August 2020 reopening plan was described in detail.

"This included working nonstop during the summer to understand and try to

predict the impact of the coronavirus at our school and especially our very young and medically-fragile students. She stayed current with CDC guidelines, state mandates, and county guidelines. She collaborated with our county health department, district offices, and local pediatricians to help craft our policies and procedures. Once these procedures were developed and approved, she initially trained all staff prior to reopening and continues to update our policies and share that with staff and parents," wrote Cindi Parker-Pearson, Principal.

"It's the most rewarding job," Laurie stated. "I love to see how the kids



progress. They're little humans that have such mighty spirits – the kids are definitely my daily inspiration."

Our entire Achievement Academy family benefits from Laurie's expertise and passion for her work.

Here is a sneak peek at our spectacular line-up of Chefs:



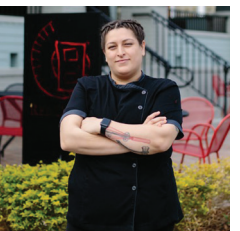
Chef Brandon Bailey
Lakeland BBQ Company



Chef Tina Calhoon
Frescos Southern
Kitchen & Bar



Chef Sean Champe
Terrie Lobb Catering,
Inc.



Chef Lucy Cortes-Castaneda
Red Door Lakeland



Chef Cem Demirhan
Nineteen61



Chef Jason Ellis
Cob & Pen



Chef Gene Gelb
Publix Aprons Cooking
School & Catering



Chef Scott Greenlee
Chef Scott's Creations



Chef Matt McBrayer
The Terrace Grille



Chef Abigale Weech-Starkey
The Chop Shop



Sponsorships are available. For more information, please visit AchievementAcademy.com or contact Kristin Aiken at (863) 683-6504.

Save the Date!
Monday, February 28, 2022
6 to 9 p.m. at Participating
Chefs' Restaurants

Our signature fundraising event is rapidly approaching! The Top Chef of Polk County will take place on Monday, February 28, 2022. This event combines delicious food, friendly competition, and fundraising into an evening that is not to be missed!

Guests will enjoy a three-course meal, expertly paired with a wine or libation to complement each dish. Throughout the evening, there will be an online silent auction to add to the fun AND raise funds in support of our programs!