

SPARKS PLUGS

A quarterly publication of the UAB Civitan-Sparks Clinics
1530 3rd Avenue S, CH19 307, Birmingham, AL, 35294-2041
205.934.5471 P | 205.975.2380 F
www.circ.uab.edu/sparks

SPRING/SUMMER 2010 EDITION

From the Director...

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”
Aesop, *The Lion and the Mouse*

Conferences/Workshops

Suzanne Geerts, MS, RD and the UAB Rett Syndrome Team under the direction of Dr. Alan Percy, traveled to the Robert Wood Johnson School of Pediatrics, New Brunswick, NJ, February 6-7, to conduct the Rett Syndrome Natural History Study for the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network. They were joined by teams from the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX and Greenwood Genetics Center, Greenwood, SC.

Lauren Dodd, MA, RD and **Suzanne Geerts, MS, RD** were featured speakers at the Intensive Course for Nutrition for Infants, Children and Adolescents, February 21–24, in Birmingham. The conference was sponsored by the UAB Departments of Pediatrics and Nutrition Sciences, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the Health Resources and Services Administration-Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Dodd addressed the topic of common inherited disorders of metabolism. Ms. Geerts was joined by Harriet Cloud, MS, RD to address nutrition screening and intervention strategies for children with special needs. Ms. Geerts closed the meeting with the topic of emerging advocacy and research efforts in the developmental disabilities population. The conference was well attended by approximately 100 health practitioners including two nurses, registered dietitians and nutrition students from all over the US.

CALENDAR



Clinical Operations Committee Meeting

Friday, June 18
Friday, July 16
Friday, August 20
Friday, September 17
1:00 PM

Annual Retreat

Friday, June 4
8:30 AM

Open Forum

Friday, July 9
1:00 PM

General Staff Meeting

Friday, August 6
Friday, September 10
1:00 PM

Valisia Davis, CRNP co-presented “Interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders: An Overview” on March 3 at the UAB Honors House.

On March 4, **Laurie Lou Smith** spoke at the National Association of School Psychologists Annual Conference in Chicago, IL about her research on school services and children with demyelinating diseases.

Cathy Burke, MS, CCC-SLP and **Allie Green, MSW** served as co-mentors for a new class, “Transdisciplinary Teaming” through the Speech and Hearing Department at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa on March 25. Trainees from the disciplines of speech/language pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, social work, psychology, and nutrition spoke about their experiences working on Civitan-Sparks teams. **Candace Davis, Kristen DeLauney, Kristy Domnanovich, Amanda Maxwell, Felicia Owens,** and **Christie Salamone** represented the Civitan-Sparks Clinics Training Program very well.

Mary Rebekah Trucks, BS participated in a panel presentation during the American Occupational Therapy Association national meeting in April. **Dr. Stephanie Deluca** and **Dory Ainsworth, MS, OTR/L** assisted Mary Rebekah in compiling information for the presentation, “Measuring Constraint Induced Movement Therapy Outcomes: Choosing the Right Standardized Assessment for Your Clinical Setting.”

On April 23, **Dr. LaTamia White-Green** presented, “Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Psychiatrist’s Role” to the Alabama Psychiatric Services at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel at the Convention Center in Montgomery, AL.

The UAB Rett Syndrome team including **Suzanne Geerts, MS, RD**, and under the direction of Dr. Alan Percy, traveled to Rush Hospital in Chicago, IL on April 24-25 to conduct the ongoing Rett Syndrome Natural History Study. They were joined by medical teams from Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, Greenwood Genetics Center,

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



BART HODGENS, PHD, is co-director with Cryshelle Patterson, PhD, of the UAB Summer Treatment Program, offered through the Civitan International Research Center and the Civitan-Sparks Clinics. The program, for children ages 6-12 with behavioral disorders such as ADHD, Asperger's disorder and oppositional defiant disorder, will be held June 21 through July 30. See vimeo.com/10286399 for more information.

Additionally, Drs. Hodgens and Patterson co-direct the ADHD Parent Support Group, a networking system for parents of elementary and middle school-aged children with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Meetings occur on the 1st Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm. For more information, go to www.main.uab.edu/Sites/adhd-support.

Greenwood, SC, and Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, MA. The study is part of the NIH Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network. The clinic activities are also sponsored by the Illinois Rett Syndrome Association and the International Rett Syndrome Foundation.

During May, **Fred Biasini, PhD**, and **Laurie Lou Smith, EdS, NCSP** conducted a workshop, "Providing Support and Assistance to Families Challenged by Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities," in five locations within the state: Shocco Springs Baptist Camp, Holiday Inn in Decatur, Bryant Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama Southern Community College in Thomasville, and Troy University Trojan Center. Attendees included DHR Child Welfare staff (i.e., foster care, intake, investigation, resource, co-directors).

Fred Biasini, PhD, Valisia Davis, CRNP, and **Teresa Teer, LGSW, MSW** participated in the conference, "Childhood Mental Health: Promoting Health & Reducing Risks" at the UAB School of Nursing on Friday, May 21. The Leadership Education in Child Health Nursing (LECHN) and the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental & Related Disabilities (LEND) programs sponsored the conference. The keynote speaker was John Lochman, PhD, ABPP from the University of Alabama where he serves as Director for the Center for Prevention of Youth Behavior Problems. He is also Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*.

Suzanne Geerts, MS, RD will be on the faculty for the 2010 Summer Public Health Institute at The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN on May 23-26. The institute provides an opportunity for health professionals to learn more about their interest or to "immerse themselves" in a specialty area for a few days or up to three weeks. Ms. Geerts and other dietitians will present in the concentration area of Woman and Child Health and Nutrition-Assessment, Prevention, and Treatment of Child and Adolescent Obesity. Ms. Geerts' special emphasis focused on obesity identification, incidence, and intervention in the special needs population. More information about the institute is available at www.sph.um.edu/ce/institute.

Sparks Award



Congratulations to
Cynthia Helms,
recipient of the Sparks
Award for the spring
quarter. Thank you,
Cynthia,
for all of your
hard work and
commitment to the
**Civitan-Sparks
Clinics.**

Research/Publications

Dr. LaTamia Green is Principal Investigator of the MCH Block Grant funded by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for 10/1/2009 through 9/30/2010.

Simpson-Ramsey Symposium organizers on April 22 included **Fred Biasini, PhD, Cindy Sweeney, LGSW, MSW, and Robin Burkett**. **Dr. Biasini** addressed the group, detailing the history of Simpson-Ramsey. Four trainees from the Civitan-Sparks Clinics submitted poster presentations: **Annie Garner, Kristy Domnanovich, Michael Gower, and Christie Salamone**.

Annie Garner's poster, "Influence of parental distracted driving on teens with and without ADHD," sponsored by the Department of Medicine and the UAB University Transportation Center won in the Poster Presentations–Translational/Clinical category at the Simpson-Ramsey Symposium on April 22.

Christie Salamone's poster, "Developing More Ways for Children to Share Their Perceptions of Parenting Behaviors," sponsored by the Department of Psychology won in the Poster Presentations–Translational/Clinical category at the Simpson-Ramsey Symposium on April 22.

Suzanne Geerts, MS, RD was Content Advisor of Association Positions Committee Workgroup for the following publication: Position of the American Dietetic Association: Providing Nutrition Services for People with Developmental Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs. *JADA*, 2010; 110 (Issue 2), 296-307.

Julie Woodruff, AuD, CCC-A and **Belinda Blackstone, MS, CCC-A** participate as audiologists in the hearing test aspect for all the clients found with cytomegalovirus (CMV) in the study, "Traditional 'Heel Stick' Test is not an Effective Screening Tool for CMV in Newborns." Go to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) website at www.nidcd.nih.gov/news/releases/10/4_13_10.htm for more information.

Sarah O'Kelley, PhD attended the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) in Philadelphia, PA on May 20-22, where seven posters were presented by Civitan-Sparks faculty and trainees. Five students/trainees attended the conference to present their posters and network with international researchers and other students interested in autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Munger SM, Adams N, Sheridan EH, Gower MW, Barstein J, Perez T, Griffith EM. (2010, May). "Bottle or No Bottle: Effects of Breastfeeding in the ASD Population."

Gower MW, Perez T, Adams N, Sheridan EH. (2010, May). "Increasing Facial Recognition Skills in Children with Autism."

Griffith EM, O'Kelley SE, Perez T, Biasini FJ, Guest K, Bailey KJ. (2010, May). "Use of the Social Responsiveness Scale as a Screening Tool for Children Referred for Evaluation of Developmental Disabilities."

Giles JG, Griffith EM, Gower MW, Sheridan EH, Perez T, Barry RA, Adams N. (May, 2010). "The Effect of Birth Order on Cognitive Ability and Symptom Severity in Children with Autism."

Sheridan EH, Gower MW, McCalla MK, Griffith EM, Biasini FJ. (2010, May). "Symptomatic Predictors of Adaptive Functioning in Children with ASD."

O'Kelley SE, Guest K, Munger SM, Bailey KJ, Biasini FJ, Griffith EM. (2010, May). "Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders in Young Children Referred for Developmental Assessment: Guiding Efficient Assessment Practices within a Tertiary Clinic Setting."

Kumar SL, Pennick MR, Griffith EM, Kana RK. (2010, May). "Neural Bases of Inferring Emotional and Perceptual Information from Body Postures in High-Functioning Children with Autism."

Announcements

Welcome to **Rob Bare, PhD** who joined our Psychology Team from private practice on April 1, and **Candace Davis, MS, OTR/L**, a recent graduate from our own Training Program who became full-time with the OT Team on May 1.

The Summer Treatment Program (STP) received the gift of a full scholarship for 2010 from an anonymous donor. This money will be used to provide two partial scholarships to deserving families. This is the second donated scholarship for the program which is co-directed by **Drs. Bart Hodgens** and **Cryshelle Patterson**.

Congratulations to **Lauren Dodd** who has been elected Secretary/Treasurer of the Alabama Dietetic Association for 2010-2011, and President of the Birmingham District Dietetic Association for 2010-2011.

Upcoming Events

Civitan-Sparks Annual Retreat

Alabama 4-H Conference Center
Columbiana, AL
Friday, June 4

Summer Treatment Program

Community Education South School
Monday, June 21 – Friday, July 30

UAB Holidays

Monday, May 31 – Memorial Day
Monday, July 5 – Independence Day
Monday, September 6 – Labor Day



E-mail your news,
recent publications,
presentations, or
significant
announcements to
Cynthia Helms at
helms@uab.edu.