



hms school news

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy | Founded 1882 | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania | SPRING 2010

So, What's Cookin'?



Dietary aide Karen Sharpe (right) serves lunch to Eubie Hodges, who approaches the food station with her feeding aide, Maxine Fussell.

Fried chicken, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes and sweet potato pie—the HMS menu in honor of Martin Luther King’s birthday sounds comforting and yummy! Robert Frazier, director of the HMS food operation for Linton’s Managed Services, enjoys coming up with theme-based meals for special events and student projects. But choosing the menu is only part of his challenge.

Staff must prepare each food in several textures—regular, pureed and chopped—to meet students’ individual needs. They provide a version of each menu that accom-

modates special dietary needs for religious practices, reduced fat, no tomato, no tomato and milk, and vegetarian. They prepare every meal at HMS, mostly from scratch, with an eye to “plate appeal” to whet students’ appetites. And they do this for three meals a day, seven days a week, plus snacks.

Mr. Frazier, who has had extensive food service experience in schools, colleges and senior health-care facilities, came to HMS a little over a year ago. “HMS is a small but complex operation,” he says. “We can accommodate a child’s needs whether he receives all, part

or none of his nutrition by mouth. For those who do eat, we offer choices.”

Mr. Frazier has expanded the menu options for resident students. Everyday at breakfast and dinner, students can now choose among three entrees. To enhance students’ pleasure in their meals, the food service is starting to use shaped food molds instead of rounded scoops to make pureed foods more appealing and to retain the food integrity of the child’s plate. Directed by Speech Therapy, youngsters whose nutritional

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New Sensorium Excites the Imagination

Samantha focuses her gaze, reaching out to grab strands of fiber-optic lights. Kendyll is motivated to operate a switch that turns on the lights she’s attracted to. Tommy responds to the tactile stimulation he gets in the lighted ball bath.

HMS’s relocated Sensorium is up and running. One of the final renovations to the Gowen Education Wing, the Sensorium is now housed in a larger room more conveniently located to classroom groups that frequently utilize the space. *continued on page 3*



Samantha Crossfield reaches for strands of fiber optic lights in the Sensorium, with occupational therapist Emily Hayes. In the Sensorium environment, Samantha is able to relax and better focus.





Executive Director's Message

By Diane L. Gallagher, PhD

With temperatures warming, how easy to forget that only weeks ago we confronted massive snowfalls and frequent school closings. For HMS, big storms are particularly complicated since the comfort and safety of our residential students remain our responsibility. Thanks to our extraordinary staff, we came through February's challenges smoothly.

During the first storm that fell over the weekend, staff made sure that resident students could enjoy the wonder and beauty of the storm. Some youngsters were able to play and sled in the snow. When weekend recreation staff were unable to travel the distance from their homes to HMS, one of our assistant teachers who lives nearby, came to school to engage students in special activities.

In preparation for the second storm that hit the Philadelphia area midweek, nursing staff came prepared on Tuesday to sleep over—and some remained until Thursday morning, taking turns sleeping, to be sure that we had proper coverage for our students. The coordination of work and sleep activities over approximately 72 hours, was deftly carried out by Lauren Dukes, Assistant to the Director of Nursing Services, who spent an amazing three-plus days at the school to insure staff coverage and to keep spirits up—even having a Pajama Day!

Facilities staff also prepped ahead of time, laying down de-icer and clearing sidewalks in the neighborhood as well as HMS's driveway. They continued to work long days through the storm, even in howling wind conditions, to keep sidewalks and ramps clear in case a student's emergency evacuation would be necessary. We also hired a contractor to plow and move snow to clear the lot for staff parking when school reopened.

Our food service director also stayed overnight at HMS in order to feed students and staff and to be sure that special treats were available for everyone through the storm.

Stepping up to the plate when needed is the norm for HMS staff. We've long been proud of our team and the way in which everyone pulls together to serve students' needs. But this graciousness and generosity is something we don't take for granted and do want to celebrate. Thank you to all who made the record snowfalls of 2010 a happy memory for HMS.



HMS Hosts Professional Symposium in September

HMS will present a one-day symposium for special education professionals, "Serving All Our Students: Meeting the Needs of the Child with Complex Disabilities" on September 28, 2010 from 8:30am to 4:15pm at PaTTAN's King of Prussia facilities. The program will draw on the expertise of HMS staff, school district superintendents, directors and supervisors of special education, direct service providers and parents of children with special needs.

Ron Cowell, President of the Education Policy and Research Center, will offer keynote remarks. Annie Steinberg, pediatrician and

child and adolescent psychiatrist, will speak at lunch.

Program sessions will explore working models to support students in varied settings by bringing services to the student; collaborating to keep the medically fragile student in school, regardless of the placement; and finding the appropriate placement where the needs of a child with multiple disabilities can be met in a coordinated way.

For further information, please contact Suzanne Zimmermann, 215.222.2566 or suzannez@hmsschool.org.



SNOW PLAY

John Bailey, sporting cool shades, enjoys the snow and sunshine at HMS following one of the February storms. He is supported in an inflatable sled that staff members could pull across the snow.



FINDING YOUR RHYTHM

Emily Whiteman drums with enthusiasm during a recent performance by "Drummers With Attitude," a group of students from Bristol, PA who beat out rhythms on large sour cream containers. Classroom teacher Cheryl Leask joins Emily, while some of the performers and their director watch from the background.

WHYY TV's Spot Featuring HMS to Air in May

WHYY TV's Arts and Culture *Experience* spot featuring the HMS dance/movement therapy program is now scheduled to air between May 17 and May 30. The two-and-a-half minute video will be shown several times during the two-week period, typically close to the hour and half-hour breaks between regular programming.

WHYY filmed HMS dance/movement therapist Rachel Federman-Morales last year as she worked with students and also

filmed a performance of the after-school dance collaborative project held at the Painted Bride Art Center.

Closer to the airing date, HMS may be able to learn exact times that the spot will appear and will notify our readers. Once the spot airs, it will become part of WHYY's on-line video library at <http://video.whyy.org/program/1100712934> that visitors can view at their leisure.



INAUGURATION FESTIVITIES

Student Government celebrated with an Inaugural Ball in January, when outgoing officers were honored and newly-elected officers were introduced to fanfare and live music. Here, President Anthony Casillas delivers his inauguration remarks. Speech/language pathologist Marianne Gellert-Jones assists by holding Anthony's long scroll of acknowledgement and thanks to his many supporters..

New Sensorium Excites the Imagination



Tommy Travers experiences tactile and visual stimulation as occupational therapist Trish Hamilton works with him in the lighted ball bath, a station in the newly relocated Sensorium.

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The Sensorium concept is hardly new to HMS. Developed over 13 years ago, it is a multi-sensory room patterned after the "Snoezelen" model. Snoezelen comes from the Dutch verbs "snillelen" (to seek out or explore) and "doezelen" (to relax). Our Sensorium, which has different stations for students to interact with the environment either independently or with assistance, is managed by the occupational therapy department, whose members use a variety of sensory activities in their work with students. Occupational and speech therapists often team up to treat there together. Classroom teachers, physical therapists and recreation therapists also use the relaxing environment to support their program goals.

For some youngsters, the Sensorium offers a calming relaxation space. For students who

may become over-stimulated in the larger classroom setting, the Sensorium is a pared-down environment where they can better focus and work on particular skills. For others, the enticing lights and sounds serve as motivators to vocalize and communicate, to make the effort to touch and grasp objects or to practice skills like cause and effect.

In addition to different sound and light stations, the room contains a lighted ball bath, a bubble tube, two types of swings—one for relaxation and another for more active participation, a sink for water play, raised mats for stretching and relaxation and a vibrating somatron bean bag that can be used with excitatory or relaxation tapes. The new space is carpeted and offers a large, bare wall, perfect for projecting a variety of images to encourage student response.





Parents Corner

by Jenneen Jenkins-Smith

Car travel for my family had become very difficult. Whenever we went on a family outing, I would have to lift my daughter, Xzaria, from her wheelchair and prop her up with pillows. (And this is not safe!) As time passed, this became even harder because Xzaria was becoming older, taller and heavier. I knew we needed an accessible van, but we couldn't afford one. But I trust that all Xzaria's needs have been supplied by God and that He would show me a way. So He did!

I held a fundraiser, Xzaria's Sunday Café, at our church. We charged \$20 per plate. My family and I cooked all the food. Family and friends were waiters and waitresses for the day. It was a success!! We raised \$7,000. I never thought we could raise that much.

While planning the fundraiser, I contacted Xzaria's Supports Coordinator at the PA Office of Developmental Programs* to inform him that I wanted to purchase an accessible vehicle. He instructed me to get quotes and fax them in. Of course I believed it was going to be that easy—NOT! After sending in several quotes, they denied me. I was so disappointed, but I got proactive.

I wrote to the Director and other administrators of the Office of Developmental Programs, explaining that it was hazardous for Xzaria's health and safety to travel out of her wheelchair and emphasized that an accessible van would promote her independence and equality in life. I also described our fundraiser to raise some of the money. After a long deliberation, they gave me funds for the lift equipment on the van. This equipment cost more than the van, so that was good!

Things were starting to work out, but I still didn't have enough money for the van. In online investigation I came across the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation. This organization can give you a low interest loan. I received a \$12,000 loan and would

So, What's Cookin'?

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intake is solely from tube feedings might get tastes through spoon licks, both for the pleasure of the taste sensation and to maintain their oral skills.

HMS's food service also serves lunch for the entire staff and for evening staff who care for resident students. Although meeting students' needs is the primary focus, HMS staff do enjoy the additional benefit of a tasty meal, with choices of salad bar, hot entrees, fruit and baked dessert. And Mr. Frazier has been responsive to staff requests, offering options beyond students' choices.

Mr. Frazier works with HMS dietitian, Heidi Kecskemethy to plan nutritious menus for the fall and spring seasons. Each season's selections involve a five-week menu cycle. HMS menus must meet the US Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch standards as well the school's own nutritional guidelines.

For each menu cycle, they start with a regular menu with no modifications and consider a variety of factors: distribution of protein types, menu repeats, color, nutritional variety, children's and adults' tastes, the look of the plate, changes in student requirements and changes in youngsters' tastes over time. At one time, for example, pork barbecue was served. Now with students' increased medical issues, its texture is considered problematic and pork is off the menu. They also look at menu-related production issues—with the smaller weekend staff, they

only have to pay \$1,500 in interest. They worked with me and helped because my credit wasn't so great.

I must tell you, *never say what you can't do* and *never give up*. Just because one door closes, PUSH another one open!

*formerly the Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation

wouldn't plan an item for Monday's lunch that requires lengthy, complicated preparation.

Once the menu is in place, Mr. Frazier and Ms. Kecskemethy tweak and refine the selections to accommodate various dietary restrictions. They also insure nutritional balance over the course of a day for resident students, who eat all of their meals at HMS.

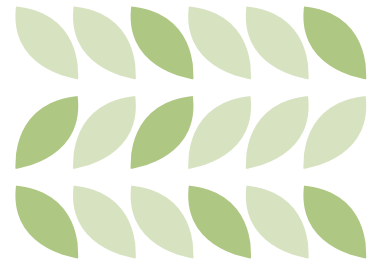
HMS monitors a list of "unsafe foods" from the Speech Therapy department that are always excluded from the student menu, such as hotdogs, corn, popcorn and lima beans. Although HMS has never been affected by a beef recall, for extra safety, the school does not serve ground beef to students, using ground turkey instead. The school receives government commodities, from apples to turkey, only some of which are appropriate for students. Those that are not are used for staff menu selections.

Ms. Kecskemethy says, "Providing nutrition to our students is a partnership between food services, the dietitian, nursing, speech therapy and education, depending on a child's medical needs." She points out that in addition to nutritional components, the food service department has to accommodate a child's food allergies and intolerances and be mindful of textures and the consistency of thickened liquids that students can tolerate. "Within a given day, or even a meal," she says, "staff may need to shift a child to a safer texture if the student is experiencing swallowing difficulty."

Mr. Frazier accommodates a child who will eat only crunchy foods. He works with Ms. Kecskemethy to celebrate events like National Nutrition Month and the Great PA Apple Crunch. He enjoys collaborating with students and staff to further school-wide education themes like this year's focus on the United States, developing menus such as President Obama's favorite foods for the

class group studying Washington, DC. He also partners with student government to plan refreshments for the spring prom and other student-sponsored activities. And his staff cater numerous board-related receptions, graduation and other special events.

Mr. Frazier surveys staff and students to ascertain levels of satisfaction and to hear menu suggestions. Despite the challenges, there is clearly an obliging, cooperative relationship between Mr. Frazier, representing a contracted service, and HMS. "I love coming to work here everyday," he says.



HMS School News

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A publication of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, dedicated to reporting about student life, school programs and important events.

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HMS School is nonsectarian, admitting children from any locality without regard to race, religion, gender or country of origin.

The Mission of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy is to educate, nurture, and care for children and youth with motor impairments who may also have other disabilities resulting from brain injury with the goal of assisting each individual in achieving his or her maximum potential. HMS School aims to facilitate independence and improve the quality of life for its students in a safe and secure environment so they can lead fulfilling, stimulating lives in their present and future environments.

