

weap: The People

Volume 2, Issue 4

Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Inc.

2008

About Speech

Justin Sallows

Wisconsin Early Autism Project



Speech Therapist Dana Bohrer works with Wesley Mutsch in Madison.

Here at the Madison clinic, Dana Bohrer provides speech therapy to some of our clients. I decided it was high time I interviewed her to learn more about the services she provides.

JS: Hello Dana, thank you for taking some time today to help us understand speech therapy.

DB: Thank you for the opportunity Justin. I love my work and enjoy talking about it.

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Dana Bohrer: Speech Therapist
- 1** Journey to Malaysia
- 4** Governor Doyle Visits WEAP
- 4** Summer Hours
- 5** Events - Groups & Classes – Current Openings

www.wiautism.com

Journey to Malaysia

Brenda Boehm

Early Autism Project

“Where is Malaysia?” was the first question everyone asked when my husband Jason and I told people we were moving there. The answer is in Southeast Asia, between Singapore and Thailand. We live in a suburb of the capital city, Kuala Lumpur. Most of the residents speak English here, but the rural areas speak the national language, Bahasa Malaysia.

Malaysia is lusciously green, people are friendly and the average temperature is 85 to 90 degrees every day. Sunrise and sunset stay relatively the same all year round...sunrise around 7:00 am and sunset around 7:00 pm. It rains about 4 days out of the week, usually in the afternoon or evening, between 10 minutes and 2 hours. When it rains, it pours. It can feel like a steam bath with an average of 85% humidity.

There is a diverse culture in Malaysia; approximately 60% of the people are Malay, 20% are Chinese, 10% are Indian and 10% foreign residents.

While Islam is the national religion, Malaysia accepts and celebrates all races and religions. For example, some of the national public holidays include Christmas, Deepavoli (an Indian holiday), Chinese New Year and the Muslim holiday Hari Raya.

My journey to Malaysia started while I was working at EAP Australia, which was also started by Ms. Tamlynn Graupner and Dr. Glen Sallows. A WEAP parent had moved to Malaysia and told other families about WEAP and EAP Australia. Three families called EAP Australia to begin workshop supervision.

I remember taking the trip to Malaysia for the first time. The air, smells and overall feeling was different than I had ever experienced. At the same time, many things

continued on page 3

JS: To begin, what first interested you in Speech Therapy?

DB: I have had a heart for and been interested in working with people with special needs since I was very young. My aunt is a speech pathologist in Minnesota and when I was in high school I participated in a work "shadow" day to see what it was that she did. It was then that I started to think about becoming a speech pathologist and the idea stuck with me.

JS: Can you talk about your first professional speech session? How did it match up to your expectations?

DB: The first time I conducted a speech session on my own was as a graduate student. It was scary at the time because I was being watched and evaluated by my professor. It was also difficult because up to that point in time I had only learned about things in books and I hadn't had the chance to put them into practice yet.

Things in the "real world" often tend to be different from what you read in books because the clients (kids or adults) don't often respond the way you expect or hope they will and then you have to change up your plan unexpectedly. This is something that only "real world" experience and practice can give you.

JS: Do you treat non-autistic children as well?

DB: Currently, the only children I have on my caseload are children with autism. However, I have experience working with children with a variety of disabilities ranging from simple articulation disorders to language delays to Down Syndrome to Cerebral Palsy. I also have some experience working with adults who have had strokes or other neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's. I am definitely open to the possibility of treating children with other needs at the WEAP clinic if the opportunity presents.

JS: What ages of children do you see?

DB: I am able to treat children of all ages ranging from 12mos-18 years. As I said before, I also have some experience working with adults.

JS: What techniques do you use?

DB: The techniques I use depend on the type and severity of the disability that the person has. Generally, though, I use a combination of teaching and behavioral therapy combined with play.

JS: Is there a technique that has better or faster results

than the others?

DB: This depends on the person and the nature and severity of their disability. However, I usually follow the idea of Review, Repetition and Reinforcement. The more often children are presented with items, the more likely they are to learn them. Also, when they give correct answers, reinforcers help to increase the probability that they are going to give the correct answers again later. I also make sure to review items done in the past every so often to ensure that items learned haven't been lost. Furthermore, I try to make therapy fun! I think that even though you are doing a lot of repetition, you can still make things exciting and fun for the kids and that helps them to want to keep coming back to therapy and therefore facilitates learning.

JS: What specific signs does a child exhibit that indicate a need for Speech Therapy?

DB: The general rule is that a child should be saying one word by one year old and be putting two words together in phrases by two years old. That, however, is simplifying it a bit. Children develop at different rates and there is much more to speech and language than just the words that we say. You have to take in to account the language we understand (receptive language) as well as the ability to understand and use nonverbal cues and gestures. My best advice to parents is that they know their children best. If they feel that something does not sound right with their children's speech or they do not seem to be developing language in an appropriate way, get the advice of an ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) certified Speech Language Pathologist.

JS: How long of a process is Speech Therapy?

DB: That depends on the needs of the person with the disability. A simple articulation disorder can be fixed in a matter of months, but a more severe language disorder or someone with a more severe disability such as Down Syndrome or Autism may need speech therapy for several years.

JS: Is Speech Therapy covered under the waiver system? Does insurance cover it?

DB: Unfortunately, speech therapy is not currently covered under the waiver system until the child goes post-intensive. Once that happens, the services may be covered if they are approved by the county case worker. Some insurance companies do cover speech services.♦



were similar. It was exciting to meet new families and their children. I was anxious to see the children progress. Workshop supervision required taking an 8 hour flight to Kuala Lumpur every three months and talking to families every other week on the phone. Soon three families grew to five families and then a waiting list was started. Other parents were eager to start an ABA program supervised by EAP. I found it difficult to tell them about the waiting list and wanted to do more to help Malaysian families.

In July 2006, Tammy and Dr. Sallows heard about the Malaysian families waiting for treatment and extended their business trip from Australia to Malaysia. Ms. Graupner, Dr. Sallows and I presented to a group of over 200 parents and professionals on WEAP's research, the ABA program/curriculum and had a live demonstration of therapy. Our reception validated that we needed to move forward with our plans.

At this time, Tammy and Dr. Sallows met Jochebed Jayasooria who then came and interned at the Madison clinic, where she was trained as a Senior Therapist.

In September 2006, my husband Jason and I moved to Malaysia. After the first week of getting organized, I started seeing the original five children and began the program with others.

"Jo" started working part-time with EAP Malaysia in January 2007 while completing her Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology. In May of 2007, she began working full time at EAP Malaysia.

The culture of Malaysia provides some challenges. Traffic is difficult and the language barrier can be a problem, particularly when ordering at a restaurant. However, the beautiful warm weather and inexpensive 90 minute massages more than make up for them.

Although I do sometimes miss my family and friends, I have

a strong sense of belonging here.

Currently EAP Malaysia provides supervision services to 24 families. The families are responsible for finding and hiring a team of therapists. Jo or I will then train the team.

As in Wisconsin, we start with an Initial Workshop. Then we visit the child and team every other week for three hours. A WEAP Senior Consultant (Dr. Sallows or Michelle Sherman) provides a progress review to each child every 6 to 8 months. Jo conducts language, cognitive and adaptive skill functioning assessments for EAP Malaysia. We also hold presentations on introductory therapist training, advanced therapist training, positive behavior strategies, play and social skills, social stories and video modeling and school shadowing.

The most affluent Malaysian families are able to afford supervision services and therapists fees in Malaysia. There are many families that call for information that aren't able to run an ABA program due to financial constraints.

The ABA Home Program Support Series was introduced by ANDI Initiative, a program dedicated to aiding Malaysian children with autism, and EAP Malaysia. This support series is for 10 families without the resources available to engage an ABA Supervisor.

Through this 6 month program, parents are guided on how to run an ABA program, work with their child, train therapists and set goals for their child. We plan on starting a third series in June. This has been one of the most rewarding projects that I've done as a Supervisor. We have brought therapy to 20 families who might not be doing ABA if this program was not available. The parents have been so thankful to learn strategies to teach their children. It's heartwarming to hear stories of success.

One significant personal joy that Jason and I have experienced in Malaysia is adopting our son Maddix. He was our six weeks old Christmas present when we met him on December 13, 2007. Jason and I fell in love with him immediately and have anxiously awaited the final court date on May 13. Afterwards our families will finally be able to meet him on our upcoming summer visit to Wisconsin.

When I look back on our journey to Malaysia and EAP Malaysia starting, I hold a strong belief that this is where Jason, Maddix and I are supposed to be right now. I'm so thankful that Tammy and Dr. Sallows have given us this opportunity. I also feel blessed to be working with Jo so that together we can bring hope to many Malaysian children and families.

For more information on EAP Malaysia, please go to www.autismmalaysia.com.

Governor Doyle visits WEAP

Amy Masek

Wisconsin Early Autism Project



Governor Jim Doyle poses with former WEAP client Michael Krzoska.

Governor Jim Doyle visited the WEAP Milwaukee Clinic as the final stop during his “Capitol for A Day” event, held in Waukesha County April 10th. WEAP hosted a reception during which invited families discussed the challenges of autism with Governor Doyle. Several parents of young children, some on the wait list and some in treatment, shared their experiences with diagnosis, waiting lists, accessing services, and successful treatment. During the visit, the Governor reaffirmed his commitment to passing legislation requiring insurance companies in Wisconsin to cover services and treatment for people with autism. He also thanked families for their support and asked for their ongoing assistance in getting the initiative approved by the legislature.

Former WEAP client Michael Krzoska attended the event with his mother, Jennifer Krzoska, and shared his inspirational story of hope. Michael, now 15, received treatment at a very young age and was fortunate to make such significant progress that he is currently planning for a medical career. He is very committed to helping families with young children with autism and shared his personal experiences with the Governor and other guests. He also shared his commitment to helping with the insurance

initiative so that other children can have the same chance for success that he had when he was young.

When asked later about meeting the Governor, Michael said “I feel hope that I'm not the only man concerned about this issue and that we can solve a problem together.” Underscoring his ongoing commitment to helping young children access treatment, Michael added “I feel like I'm a hero, a sign of hope. I can understand these people, being autistic myself, and I hope my beacon of hope reaches out to the hearts of America so we can make the world better for the autistic.”♦

Summer Hours

Wendy Stluka

Wisconsin Early Autism Project

Summer is here and so comes the opportunity to increase your hours. WEAP employs a large number of college students. Some of these students leave their work area to return home for the summer. We are currently looking for therapists who will be remaining in their work area during the school year and who could pick up hours during that time. If you would like to increase your hours this summer and help us maximize our children's therapy, please call the Human Resources department in your clinic.

Any Line Therapist interested in working more hours either temporarily or on a permanent basis, should contact their Human Resources department to arrange it. Senior Therapists cannot make such placements and are not responsible for relaying messages to Human Resources regarding hours on other teams or other employment issues. Your Human Resources Representative is the appropriate person to talk with about placement and any other questions or concerns you may have regarding your employment with WEAP.

Call your HR department early to line up work for the summer. We look forward to helping you with this.♦

Upcoming Events

(courtesy of sarnet.org)

Cycle for Autism

There will be four different routes available to ride. Choose from a short 2 mile family ride through Spring Green, a 15 mile ride that is mainly flat, a 38 mile ride for intermediate riders, or a challenging 62 mile (metric century) that goes through several towns in scenic southwest Wisconsin. The 38 & 62 mile rides will be fully supported with SAG & multiple rest stops.

Jun 7

Spring Green

7am registration

\$35 all rides except the 2 mile route is \$15 Arthur's Supper Club Hwy 14 & 23

James Larson

www.angelaautismnetwork.org kcspringgreen@gmail.com

608-574-7989

Association for Behavior Analysis

Open to all interested in the philosophy, science, education, practice, and teaching of behavior analysis.

May 23-27

Hilton

7205 Michigan Ave.

Chicago

www.abainternational.org

WISABA 1st Annual Conference

Effective Behavioral Interventions

Sundberg, Bondy, Ahearn, Wacker, Axelrod, Pyles, Tincani

Nix-Berens, Sallows and many more.

August 13-14

Carthage College

Kenosha, WI

Before June 5: \$89

After June 5: \$110

Dr. Roger F. Bass

www.wisaba.org

Groups and Classes

Location	Group	Age/Level	Facilitator	Fee	Days	Time	Start Date
Eau Claire	Social Skills	5-8 YRO	Michelle S Shelly B	\$30/session	Tuesdays	4:00-5:30PM	Feb 5- Mar 25th
La Crosse	Social Skills	5-8 YRO	Kally Angell John Nicklay	\$30/session	Thursdays	4:00-5:30PM	Feb 28- April 17th
Madison	Sibling Class	Open to Community 8-14	Chris W Michelle S	\$30 first child, Prorated for additional	1 st Tues each month	4:00PM	Feb. 5- June 3
Madison	Parent Group	Open to Community	Chris W	\$30/session \$4/child daycare (register 2 wks in advc.)	2 nd Tues ea. Month	4:00-5:30PM	Ongoing
Madison	Teen Group	Open to Community 12 + YRO	Matt N	\$40/session	Thurs E/O Is outing	4:00-6:00PM	Ongoing
Green Bay	Caregivers Group	Open to Community	C. Van Dyke	\$30/session \$4/child daycare (register 2 wks in advc.)	Mondays	5:00-6:15PM	Feb 4- May19
Milwaukee	Kid's Group	9-12 YRO	Maggie D	\$30/session +any outing fee	Mondays	4:30-6PM	Ongoing
Milwaukee	Social Skills	4-6 YRO	Stephanie B	\$30/session	Mondays	9:30-11AM	March 17- May 19
Milwaukee	Social Skills	6-8 YRO	Stephanie B	\$30/session	Mondays	4:00-5:30PM	June 16- Aug 18

Current Openings

GREEN BAY 920-338-1610 Green Bay New Holstein Manitowoc Sheboygan luxemburg	MILWAUKEE 262-432-5660 Milwaukee West Allis Oak Creek South Milwaukee	Franksville Racine New Berlin Kewaskum Juneau Cedarburg	MADISON 608-288-9040 Beaver Dam Cobb Lake Mills Portage Wisconsin Dells	EAU CLAIRE 715-832-2233 Ellsworth Hudson	LA CROSSE 608-781-6500 New Lisbon
---	--	--	---	---	---

www.wiautism.com