Continued Growth and Success for STP

The Summer Treatment Program (STP) at the Judge Baker Children’s Center is a camp-like day program for children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and related behavioral and social problems. In STP, treatment occurs during academics, art, and sports. The primary approach is behavior management with a focus on positive reinforcement, effective commands, and clear and supportive limit setting. Treatment also includes a major focus on peer relationships through daily training in social skills involving: direct instruction; modeling; role-playing; practice in communication; participation; cooperation; social reinforcement; validation; and conflict resolution. Parent components of treatment include frequent communication through a daily report card and a weekly parent group, which includes discussion of strategies for dealing with home behavior problems.

During the school year following STP, parents and children attend a monthly parent support group. STP staff consult with many of the participants’ schools and will attend IEP meetings along with the parents. These year-round activities contribute to high rates of positive outcomes, as reported to us by parents and children.

The 2013 Summer Treatment Program was a big success. A diverse group of 23 children from Boston and the surrounding suburbs, as well as three international children attended. Days were spent developing relationships and pro-social behaviors in the classroom and on the sports fields. Many children experienced success in these domains for the first time, to the delight of their parents and staff.

On Tuesday nights throughout the summer, while staff provided child care, parents met and discussed strategies for improving children’s behavior at home. The success of STP rests on fidelity to a well-researched model, and a dedicated and skilled staff who provide caring support for children when they are struggling emotionally and behaviorally. The relationships that they form are essential to the children’s engagement in behavioral treatment.

STP is led by Jamie Slavet, a licensed clinical psychologist and administrator at the Manville School. All lead counselors are enrolled in psychology doctoral programs and other counselors are undergraduates.

One student, “Tommy,” had a particularly important experience. He had struggled with making friends and being successful in school. During STP, Tommy was able to experience great success in the classroom and on the basketball court. He developed a close friendship with another student, which resulted in several play dates. Tommy and his parents are looking forward to attending the Summer Treatment Program again in 2014.

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I am deeply moved every day at Judge Baker as I encounter the children and parents who come here.

I am moved by the struggles and worry and pain that bring them here for help. I am moved when I see the changed behavior in a child at Manville School during the year; by the improvements in children like Jimmy, whom you read about in the cover letter; by the changed expressions from worry to hope that I witness on the faces of so many parents. In addition, I am moved by the glow of pride and confidence I see on kids’ faces when they greet me in the hallway during the year.

I wish each of you could sit with me when a therapist brings a child into my office so that he or she can practice basic social skills with an adult they do not know; or when children engage in an orderly game of basketball or football instead of melting down or fighting or running away. Then you could share with me - and them - in the renewed optimism about their future.

Some of the articles in this newsletter will explain in detail, how our services are so special. It is their excellence and rigor which help kids get better. It is your support that will enable us to reach out to so many more children who desperately need what we offer.

I hope that during this holiday season, you will extend your caring to these youngsters by supporting Judge Baker.

Thank you,

HOLIDAY GOOD WISHES FROM ALL OF US AT JUDGE BAKER.