

# Pediatric Therapy Today

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A Publication of Arlington Pediatric Therapy

## The Success of Vital Stim Treatment

Vital Stim is an FDA-approved, proven treatment of oropharyngeal dysphagia (an acute or chronic condition, in which the patient suffers from difficulty or discomfort swallowing, and may even result in the complete inability to swallow). An intensive therapy using a carefully calibrated electrical current, Vital Stim has recently been proven to be more effective than many current treatments, including swallowing exercises, chin tucking, diet modification, thermal-tactile stimulation, and PEG tube, all of which provide limited success, at best.

About 15 million Americans currently live with dysphagia, and 600,000 new cases are diagnosed annually. Despite these numbers, it is thought to be widely under-diagnosed. Stroke survivors, people with neurological disorders (such as Cerebral Palsy), individuals with head and neck cancer, brain tumors, and traumatic brain injury make up the majority of people living with dysphagia.

So how exactly does Vital Stim work, and why has it become so important? Vital Stim is neuromuscular electrical stimulation. First, a carefully calibrated electrical current is delivered by specially designed electrodes. This current stimulates the peripheral motor nerves. That causes the muscles responsible for swallowing to contract, and the result is improvement in contraction and swallowing function with repeated therapy. The following are the results of a recent 5-year study with 3-year follow up:

98.4% of patients saw improvement in their

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## Education and Support Groups - What APT Can Offer You and Your Family

The Education Department of Arlington Pediatric Therapy is very proud to offer several classes to aid in the development of children, as well as support groups for children and family members. These programs have been very successful!

**Baby Boosters** - Developmental play groups for children 0-3

**Terrific Tweenies** - Social group for children 3-5

**Learning Through Play** - Hands-on play group for children 3-5

**Jitterbugs** - Helping children 4-6 develop basic math and reading skills

**Social Skills Classes** - Offered for students 4-17

**Support Group for Kids** - A group for students with physical challenges, ages 8 and up

**Special Sibs** - A fun class for the siblings of students with special needs, ages 5 & up

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**Vital Stim** (Continued from page 1)

swallow function score, 97.5% of severe patients regained the swallow function past the point of PEG tube dependency, 38.3% of severe patients regained full, normal swallow function.

The three-year follow-up showed that over 76% had retained swallow function, and only 3% reported aspiration.\*\*

Vital Stim has been certified safe and effective by the FDA. It must be prescribed by a physician and can only be administered under the direction of certified health care professionals with at least three years experience in treating dysphagia.

We are currently providing Vital Stim at Arlington Pediatric Therapy. At this time, four of our therapists are trained in neuromuscular electrical stimulation. If you are interested in having your child receive Vital Stim or have any questions regarding our program, please contact Amanda Lee, Sheila Feerick, or Erin Naraky.

\*\*Vital Stim Therapy, Chattanooga Group. Results are based on FDA research submission data. Individual results may vary.

## **New Artwork adorns the walls of APT - *The Lion and the Butterfly***

As you walk throughout the halls of APT, you will notice the new storyline artwork that is now gracing our walls. *The Lion and the Butterfly* is a poetic short story wonderfully written by children's author Kate Porter. The artwork was created beautifully by artist Laurie L. Stewart. The story takes place in the jungle and follows Maximillian, the lion, and his unlikely butterfly friend. We at APT would like to extend a huge "thank you" to Ms. Porter and Ms. Stewart for adding this beautiful story and artwork to our facility. It has been a great addition for clients and staff.



\*Photo by SMC Photo Promotions

## **From Chris & Elaine**

We hope you are enjoying our very first newsletter! With the expiration of our celebratory 25th Anniversary year, we are kicking off 2006 with this newsletter with the intention of reaching out to the public. Since 1980, we have prided ourselves on being on the cutting edge of pediatric therapy. We embrace new strategies and approaches, as well as implementing the tried and true therapy methods. Each child that comes to us presents a unique opportunity to help improve a life in our community, and that is what drives us. Each child has his or her own special qualities, and the individualized treatment approaches we implement are specifically tailored to maximize progress.

APT's mission is to provide quality therapy for children on an outpatient basis. Our primary focus is to improve the quality of life of all children with special needs and their families. Professional services are delivered in a friendly, family-centered atmosphere, which offers collaborative programming and support for both the family and child. Staff and family work as a team to incorporate therapy goals into regular family routines.

We hope you find this useful, and we appreciate your thoughts and comments. Please don't hesitate to call us.

Sincerely,  
Chris Weber and Elaine Sianis

## Listening Therapy Can Offer Many Solutions

Samonas Sound Therapy (Therapeutic Listening) is a tool utilized by APT to seek solutions/improvement for the following:

- ◆ Learning Disabilities
- ◆ Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity
- ◆ Speech and Language
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Memory and Information Processing
- ◆ Focusing and Organization
- ◆ Spatial and Bilateral Organization
- ◆ Task Management
- ◆ Motivation
- ◆ Auditory Processing

Samonas is an individualized sound therapy program that combines the essential elements of music, sound, and science in specialized recordings. If applicable, an initial assessment will determine whether Samonas is the right program for your child. This evaluation has many advantages. The first area targeted is self-regulation. In this area, gains in response to sensory input, regulation of sleep, regulation of diet, the ability to focus and maintain attention, and an increase in alertness can be observed. In the area of body-related issues, an increase in motor coordination and an increase in motor planning can be observed. Children will also gain a more complex organization of space. In this area spatial orientation, understanding social space, the ability to move through space, and basic fine motor coordination can be targeted. Organization of tasks, timing and sequencing tasks, and task management can also be improved. Regarding speech and language skills, an increase in communication, interaction, emotional elements, and expressiveness can be observed. Older children will also improve fine discrimination, academic skills, and increase creativity.

These evaluations are completed by trained professionals in the Samonas Sound Therapy program. A professional must have knowledge about the required quality of

headphones and the combination of the headphones with the CD player, at the Samonas level required to impact the child. The ability to design, plan, and structure an individual listening protocol covering music, the Samonas levels being used, listening times, and placements of the listening sessions during the day need to be tailored to each individual child and monitored by a professional.

APT focuses implementation of Samonas on children's disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy and neurological disorders. Reported improvements with help of Samonas include increased reading comprehension, speech improvement, sleeping pattern improvement, increased focus, improved handwriting, and increased alertness. APT is completing evaluations in teams of two. Each team will consist of a speech pathologist and either an occupational or physical therapist. The evaluation process will last approximately 1.5 - 2 hours. The first part of the evaluation will consist of an assessment of your child and the final portion of the evaluation will be dedicated to reviewing your child's strengths and weaknesses and any recommendations the team may have.

For more information on Samonas, please visit <http://samonas.com>.

### Editor's Note:

The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the employees of Arlington Pediatric Therapy. Articles in this newsletter are meant to share information and treatment possibilities with families in need of pediatric therapy services and industry professionals.



## **FAST FORWARD® PROGRAMS: BUILDING LANGUAGE AND READING SKILLS**

### **Scientifically Proven Computer-Based Products to be Offered This Summer in Family Homes**

For the past eight summers, Arlington Pediatric Therapy, in conjunction with Scientific Learning Corporation, has offered a Fast ForWord summer program. The program is geared to students who need to improve language and reading skills. This summer, Fast ForWord products will be offered once again.

The Fast ForWord family of products, developed by Scientific Learning, helps learners of all ages rapidly improve language and reading skills in just weeks instead of years. The computer-based products combine research on how the brain learns with the latest technology to develop the skills needed to process speech and language and to become better readers.

"If students cannot follow directions or clearly understand what is being said to them in the classroom - an oral based learning environment - then they may find learning and the classroom experience challenging. They also may become bored, distracted and display disruptive classroom behavior," said Dr. Steve Miller, Senior Vice President for Research at Scientific Learning. "Fast ForWord products address those language issues and establish firmly the language-link that has been found to be fundamental to becoming a good reader and learner."

In addition to gains in language and reading skills, parents report positive changes in the classroom behavior of their children using Fast ForWord products, including participating in class discussions more actively, a higher sense of self-esteem, increased enthusiasm for learning and better social interaction with their peers. To date, more than 450,000 individuals worldwide have worked on the products with measurable results, including many through Arlington Pediatric Therapy.

Children work on Fast ForWord products 90 to 100 minutes a day, five days a week for four to eight weeks in their homes. Each day's results are transmitted via the Internet to Scientific Learning which produces reports that our staff can use to guide a student's progress. Following an intense, engaging, and individualized protocol, children using Fast ForWord products make gains in the skills critical to language and reading. On average, children make gains of 1-2 years in just 4-8 weeks.

The Fast ForWord products are based on more than 30 years of of neuroscientific and cognitive research. For more information, visit [www.ScientificLearning.com](http://www.ScientificLearning.com) or call Scientific Learning Corporation toll-free 888-452-7323.

Parents who are interested in learning more about Fast ForWord products **can contact Kathy Merrick Shuler at 847 255-8690, ext 617.**

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**Education** (Continued from page 1)

**Art Classes** - An opportunity for children 4 and up to work with different mediums (markers, paint, cray pas, clay, etc.) to build art skills and explore creativity

**Science Exploration Class** and **Pre-Writing Class** -

Two new classes that have been very well received

**Infant Massage** - A wonderful bonding experience for caregiver and infant

**Relationships - What's Right for You** - A class addressing the topic of relationships and the special needs teen/young adult, approx. age range 15-21

**Ongoing Parent Support Groups** - A wonderful opportunity for parents/grandparents/caregivers of children with special needs to connect with one another. Evening group meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7PM. Daytime group meets every other Tuesday 1-2:30 PM

## 2005 APT Holiday Party Recap

The annual APT holiday party was held Friday, December 9, 2005. Santa and his holiday elf were there to give all the APT kids presents and get pictures taken. This holiday party had the biggest turnout of kids in APT history! Thanks to everyone who made the event such a huge success, and thank you to all the families that made it such a wonderful evening. APT has reserved Santa for the 2006 party, so make sure you're there!



Andrew and Katie enjoying their visit with Santa and his elf.



## Pectus Excavatum

Since 2003, the physical therapists at Arlington Pediatric Therapy have been treating children with pectus excavatum (PE), also known as sunken chest, a congenital chest wall deformity in which several ribs and the sternum grow abnormally, producing a concave, or caved-in, appearance to the anterior chest wall. We received training for this condition from Mary Massery, PT, DPT, an expert in the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular intervention of respiratory disorders. Working with Dr. Steven Boas, a pulmonary specialist in Glenview, IL, our patients receive a full respiratory work up to measure their respiratory function. Patients have also been referred to us both pre- and post-operatively by Dr. Marleta Reynolds, a thoracic surgeon who specializes in the surgical correction of PE.

Physical therapy works to improve postural deviations associated with PE, which usually include the thoracic kyphosis, mild scoliosis, shoulder tightness, and an immobile ribcage. Through exercise, manual therapy and facilitation of intercostal muscle activity, the physical therapists at APT have been very successful in improving both posture and respiratory function. Dr. Boas has backed up our results with improvement seen in follow up.

Children from 10 months to 18 years old have been referred for treatment of their PE. PE usually becomes more noticeable during the rapid growth years, but the common postural deviations are present at an early age. It is our hope that early treatment will prevent fixed deformities and avoid future respiratory and cardiac complications.

Pectus Excavatum is the most common chest wall birth defect, affecting about one in 300.

For more information or questions, please contact Gail Montalto, Head of the APT Physical Therapy Department.

**Words of Wisdom:** "Kindness is an inner desire that makes us want to do good things even if we do not get anything in return. It is the joy of our life to do them. When we do good things from this inner desire, there is kindness in everything we think, say, want and do."

- Emmanuel Swedenborg

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## Working Toward a Great Cause - Friends of Children in Therapy Raises Funds for Families in Our Community

Friends of Children in Therapy (FOCIT) is a non-profit group headquartered in our APT facility at 3105 N. Wilke in Arlington Heights. The mission of FOCIT is to serve children with special needs, their siblings, parents, and other family members. Services that FOCIT will fund and/or support are aimed at fulfilling educational, financial, social/emotional, or therapeutic needs. FOCIT's primary means of supporting these needs will be accomplished by providing funds for specific approved programs. Strictly managed and operated by volunteers, all FOCIT funds go directly toward

helping children, their families, and the community.

FOCIT holds fundraisers throughout the year, in addition to regularly accepted donations. The biggest annual event is "Great Strides" and takes place at Arlington Trackside at the famed Arlington Race Track. This year, the event will take place on August 13. More details will follow, but mark your calendars now! It's a very fun event that is for a great cause! For more information on donating to FOCIT, please contact Irene Stoesser at APT or e-mail [IreneS@focit.org](mailto:IreneS@focit.org). For information on fundraisers, programs, classes, please visit [www.FOCIT.org](http://www.FOCIT.org).

