



T H E *Beacon*

Celebrating All Things New!

When the new school year started for LLH students on August 18, 2008, nearly half of the students were new. The welcome addition of our third class, the Green Class, paved the way for seven more families to join our school. With the earlier graduation of other students, a total of nine new families will enter the Little Light House this fall.

The new students are busy adjusting to their new schedules, which include songs and stories during circle time, snack and lunch, sensory play, and plenty of one-on-one time. "This is a totally new environment for many of the children, but they are adjusting well," shares executive director Maureen Harbinson.

Students also receive weekly speech, physical, and occupational therapy as part of our multidisciplinary program. At the end of the day, all the children are ready for a

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Joshua's Victory By Camille Ball

We have six wonderful, individual children. So I may be more aware than most that all kids have different abilities and limitations. However, I would guess all parents have watched for signs that their child is "normal", or even advanced for their age. With six kids, you have an idea of when to expect your baby to

turn over, or crawl, or walk.

Parents of children with special needs are constantly watching to see if their child is on target or in the process of "catching up," including me and Keith. Joshua is our youngest child. He was born in 2005 and diagnosed with Down syndrome. Learning this, we wondered how much



Every parent has a particular dream right now for their child: to walk, to feed himself, to say a few words. God has blessed every child not only with potential, but also with a gift to share with us: a beautiful smile, an infectious laugh, and an unstoppable spirit.

he could learn, if he would have friends, and how the world would view our precious son.

Joshua entered the Little Light House when he was six months old as their youngest student ever. When he was 18 months, he participated in "Struttin' Their Stuff" for the first time. "Struttin'" is a parent-led fundraiser that showcases the students' progress as they take a victory lap around a mini-track. We knew that year that Joshua was nowhere near running, so we decorated a wagon in keeping with the barnyard theme. He happily completed his victory lap riding in style with the help of his teacher.

In 2007 we had such hope that Joshua would be walking. By 2 1/2, most of his Down syndrome peers were walking, so surely he could walk around the victory track that fall. For a child with such a loving heart and blossoming

personality, how could he not be walking- or running- by November 2007?

It was not to be. For all Joshua's growth, his limbs were still too flexible to fully support his weight. He had progressed in crawling, feeding himself, and communicating. But, he still could not walk. Joshua completed his 2007 victory lap partially on a walker and partially crawling. He was crawling fast, but he was crawling.

"Struttin'" will be especially meaningful this year. Just prior to his third birthday, Joshua began walking independently. He is now quite prepared to take on the victory track on October 18. Keith and I, and our family will be there to cheer Joshua every step of the way.

The Little Light House has been instrumental in helping us support Joshua through this particular milestone battle. Sometimes it seemed

Giving All They've Got

By Maureen Harbinson, Executive Director

The Olympic Games took place recently in Beijing, China. What a spectacular show of athletic prowess! Now, let's go back to the time of the ancient Olympics. It's A.D. 55 and Paul is using the metaphor of the Games to encourage the church at Corinth.

Our Children here at the Little Light House are in a race called "life." Very few are sprinters, but all are running in a marathon race, slow and steady-sometimes with a sprint for a season.

Nine new students have joined us in our race: Elizabeth, Ace, Tanner,

Ashton, Aaron, JoEllen, Aidan, Gandy, and Karah, along with and four new staff, Carrie and Heather (teachers), and Lana and Maria (assistant teachers).

Next month we are involved in two events. On October 11th our children with Down Syndrome take part in the Buddy Walk, and on October 18th we have our very own "Olympics", where the eyes of Central Mississippi will be on us, as we sponsor Laps for Little Ones and "Struttin' Their Stuff." This is where all our children get to be involved in their very own victory lap.

Parents, have you got all of



your sponsorships, and are you ready to cheer your child on to victory?

The 2008 Olympics in China are over but our "Olympics" are about to begin.

Remember, the best prize is the one that doesn't tarnish, and our kids are running hard to the finish line. They are giving it everything they've got.

"You have all been to the stadium and seen the athletes' race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after the gold eternally. I don't know about you, but I'm running for the finishing line. I'm giving it everything I've got." 1 Corinthians 9:24/25 (the Message)

like it would be forever before he walked. Like any parent, we have just wanted Joshua to be happy, and healthy, and have friends. But to be honest, we have also hoped for him to walk like other kids. The Little Light House is our support system, our family. The teachers and therapists might be working with Joshua to help him walk, or say "I love you". But we get so much more than even that. The Little Light House gives us hope.



“Struttin’” Goal of \$50,000 May be Matched!

This year the Little Light House has an exciting new fundraising goal. In September and October, LLH parents will be working together to raise \$50,000 in honor of their children. “We are especially excited to be working with the Phil Hardin Foundation,” says Kimberly Massey, Director of Development. “They are helping us establish momen-

tum for ‘Struttin’ Their Stuff’ that we hope will carry on year after year.” The Foundation has agreed to match the Little Light House fundraising goal of \$50,000, but only if the parents and their teams raise that much.

“Struttin’ Their Stuff” is part of a full morning of events that includes Laps for Little Ones. “Laps” is a sepa-

rate community sponsored one-hour fun run and walk that kicks off at 8:00am on October 18. Individuals and corporate teams are also currently seeking sponsors for their participation in Laps for Little Ones.

“Fundraisers for ‘Laps’ are some of our biggest champions,” Executive Director Maureen Harbinson shares.

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“Struttin’ Their Stuff” 2008 will be October 18, 2008 at the University Christian School track and field. Come watch Joshua and our 19 other students take their victory laps, starting at 9:30am.



New Teachers “Feel the Love”

New special education teachers Carrie McMillian and Heather Reynolds have already been overwhelmed by the generosity of the community towards the Little Light House. “To think that I would not be working here if the Little Light House had not added another class... it’s unacceptable!” shared Carrie McMillian, teacher in the Green Class, our newest addition.

“Selfishly, I already love working here, so I cannot

imagine having gone somewhere else after graduating (from Mississippi College this summer).” “But at the same time,” adds Carrie, “to think of the number of families still looking for a program to help their children, it would be devastating to the whole community if the Little Light House had been unable to expand again.”

Heather agrees. “I began teaching in the Red Room this summer. I have seen my students come such a long way, and I have seen how the community has embraced us.” One of Heather’s students is

benefiting from a therapy chair donated by a family with an older child with special needs, and other students sit in specialty chairs purchased by local public school fundraisers.

Heather and Carrie join Carolyn Cornelius, teacher for the Blue Room as class instructors.

Our new assistant teachers are Maria Quan and Lana Boatman.

Little Light House welcomes new teachers Carrie McMillian and Heather Reynolds



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nap, but many new parents are already noticing a difference in their child. Most commonly, the parents have noticed their child becoming more independent and willing to try new things.

Nikki Hester lives in Rose Hill near Meridian and has made arrangements for her daughter Gandy to attend the Little Light House. "I'm just like every other parent wanting the best for their child. I just never knew that you would have to hunt so hard to find it for a child with special needs. We are just so grateful to have the Little Light House to help Gandy be all that she can be."

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"These supporters have no family ties to the Little Light House, but are working hard and advocating for us, nonetheless. To have so many people willing to make our services possible is truly a blessing for us."

Everyone can be involved in Laps for Little Ones or "Struttin' Their Stuff." Register to walk or run, or sponsor a "Laps" participant or LLH student by visiting www.llhms.org or calling 601-829-3446. Your support will help us "turn the everyday ordinary... into the extraordinary."



Did You Know?

*You can donate online,
anytime?*

Go to www.llhms.org

The Little Light House Central Mississippi is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit Christian Developmental Center for children with special needs, age birth through six years of age. The Little Light House Central Mississippi does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or medical diagnosis (unless it affects the child's ability to attend on a regular basis) in the administration of its educational policies, and other school administered programs. Some behavioral conditions may be evaluated on an individual basis. The Little Light House Central Mississippi assures that all children's records will be maintained as confidential. All gifts to The Little Light House Central Mississippi are tax-deductible, less goods and services received

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