



# TEACCH

Treatment and Education of Autistic and other Communication handicapped Children



## administration outreach

Volume 2, Issue 2

October 2010



**TEACCH**

University of North  
Carolina at Chapel Hill  
School of Medicine

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### A Message from Dr. Margaret Dardess

*Interim Director of TEACCH*



Greetings,

Much has happened since our last newsletter in May. The recession has impacted TEACCH as it has the rest of the state and the nation. Along with the rest of UNC we sustained budget cuts of 5.8 percent, but were not forced to lay off any personnel this year. We were able to offer services without interruption. The University has been told to model for a five, ten, or a fifteen percent cut for this coming year. Cuts of this magnitude would have a significant impact on our services. As part of an ongoing planning process we are examining TEACCH administrative and business practices, clinical services and outreach to assure that we will continue to be able to offer services even in a down economy. This planning process will ultimately expand to include people across the state who are involved with TEACCH and with autism.

In August we began the search for a new director by assembling a search committee made up of people who are committed to finding a strong leader for TEACCH. Members of the committee, in addition to me as Chair, are Meredith Gibbs, Vice President of Administration, The Medical Foundation North Carolina, Inc.; Lee Marcus, Director Emeritus, Chapel Hill TEACCH; Karen McCall, Vice President Public Affairs and Marketing, The UNC Health Care System; Lee McLean, Associate Dean and Chair, Department of Allied Health; Jack Naftel, Professor, Department of Psychiatry; Samuel Odom, Director, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center; Steven Reznick, Professor, Dept of Psychology; Karen Stallings, Associate Director, the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and Carol Ashby, Search Committee Support. Search Committee members have met with TEACCH directors, representatives from across UNC Chapel Hill and parents to hear their views on the qualifications of the next director.

Once the internal university approval process is complete the position will be advertized locally and in professional journals, and we will begin to talk with potential candidates. Parents, members of the UNC community and the autism community will have an opportunity to meet and comment on the final candidates. The names of the candidates in the initial stages will be held in confidence. This is required by law; it also encourages interested parties to talk to us while they are considering whether they want to be considered as candidates. Once we narrow the search and candidates agree to meet with people outside the search committee and to address public groups, the process will become more public. While the search is in the initial stages, committee members will not be able to discuss candidates with people who are not on the committee. They will, however, be able to engage in discussion about the search process and the qualities that are desirable in the next director.

Once a new director has accepted the position, TEACCH will move its organizational home from the Dean's Office in the School of Medicine to the AHEC program. Like TEACCH, AHEC has nine regional centers around the state, most located within a few miles of the TEACCH regional centers. AHEC works to meet the state's health workforce needs by providing educational programs in partnership with academic institutions, health care agencies, and other organizations that work to improve health care. Both AHEC and TEACCH share a strong commitment to serving North Carolina. The program is led by Thomas J. Bacon, Director of AHEC and Executive Associate Dean in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine, a position he has held since 1996. Prior to becoming the NC AHEC Program Director, Dr. Bacon served as Director of the Mountain AHEC in Asheville, N.C., for fourteen years. His many years of leadership of a statewide organization and his experience with strategic planning will be extremely helpful to TEACCH.

TEACCH is also looking for an assistant director who will assist the director with long range and with fiscal and administrative oversight of the regional centers, the CLLC and Administration & Research. Any suggestions of people who might have an interest in these positions would be very welcome.

I thank you for your support of TEACCH and your encouragement of all at TEACCH who work so hard for individuals with autism and their families. I personally appreciate the encouragement I have received from people within TEACCH and from the community and am looking forward to continuing with TEACCH until we find a new director.

Sincerely,

*Margaret B. Dardess*



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL



## AHEC—Tom Bacon



Thomas Bacon, Director of AHEC

Since TEACCH will report to AHEC once a new director is chosen, we thought you would like to know about the organization and its director, Tom Bacon.

Tom Bacon, DrPH, has served as Executive Associate Dean and AHEC Program Director at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine since 1996. Previously, he served for fourteen years as Executive Director of the Mountain AHEC in Asheville, one of the nine regional centers in the NC AHEC system.

Tom grew up on the west coast of Florida and graduated from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg with a degree in psychology. After college he and his wife, Ellen, served for two years in the Peace Corps in Korea, where he taught English as a second language and Ellen worked with programs for children with developmental disabilities. They moved to North Carolina in the early 1970's to attend graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill, where Ellen earned her PhD in special education and Tom his DrPH in health policy and administration.

Tom holds faculty appointments in the Dept. of Social Medicine in the School of Medicine and in Health Policy and Management in the School of Public Health. His academic and career interests are in health workforce development, with a particular focus on primary care providers to serve the needs of rural and other vulnerable populations. He is a member and Vice Chair of the Board of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, a member of the Advisory Board for the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, and chairs the board of the North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs.



## AHEC – Area Health Education Center: A New Location for TEACCH

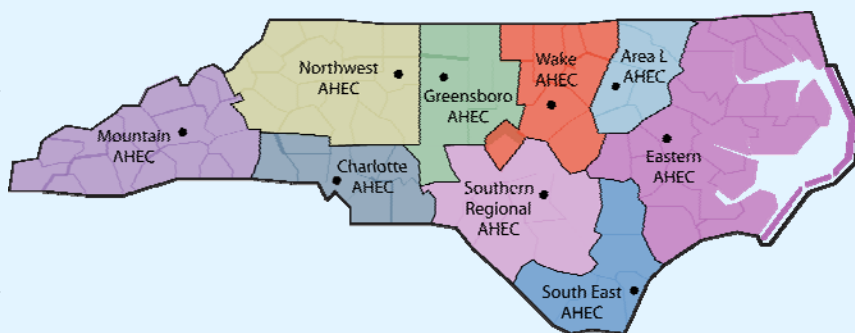
**AHEC History** - The North Carolina AHEC Program evolved from national and state concerns with the supply, distribution, retention and quality of health professionals. In 1970, a report from the Carnegie Commission recommended the development of a nationwide system of Area Health Education Centers. Legislation and federal support since the early 1970s has made the implementation of AHEC programs possible in many states. (There are currently AHEC Programs in 48 states.) This national focus coincided with a growing effort in North Carolina to establish statewide community training for health professionals and reverse a trend toward shortages and uneven distribution of primary care physicians in the state's rural areas. In 1974, the North Carolina General Assembly approved and funded a plan by the UNC-CH School of Medicine to create a statewide network of nine AHEC regions. The North Carolina AHEC is widely recognized as among the most successful of all the AHEC programs across the country.

**The Program Office** is located at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and the Regional AHEC Centers are located in many of the same cities as the TEACCH regional centers: Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Durham, Greensboro, Greenville, Raleigh, Wilmington, and Winston Salem.

**AHEC Mission** - The mission of the North Carolina AHEC Program is to meet the state's health and health workforce needs by providing educational programs in partnership with academic institutions, health care agencies, and other organizations committed to improving the health of the people of North Carolina.

AHEC's major programs and services include:

- Residency programs in family medicine, pediatrics, general internal medicine, general surgery, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology to train physicians to practice in NC communities.
- Community-based experiences for students in all health fields to give them practice experience and expose them to opportunities for practice.
- Continuing education for health care professionals to keep them up-to-date, promote evidence based practices, improve the quality of care, and improve patient safety.
- Health careers programs to recruit more under-represented and disadvantaged young people into health careers and improve the diversity of the health workforce.
- Library and information services to provide the most up-to-date resources for students, residents, and healthcare practitioners.





## East Carolina University Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Awards Greenville TEACCH

By John Dougherty

The Greenville TEACCH Center (GTC), one of the three original centers established in 1972, was initially located on the campus of East Carolina University (ECU). The first staff worked in The Malene G. Irons Building. In 1964, Malene Iron's, MD, became the first director of the Developmental Evaluation Clinic at ECU providing diagnostic evaluations and effective treatment for handicapped children. Dr. Eric Schopler, the founder of TEACCH and Dr. Malene, as she was affectionately known, had similar visions in the early 1970's. For a brief summary of Dr. Irons decorated career, please see: [http://media.lib.ecu.edu/archives/bldg\\_history.cfm?id=65](http://media.lib.ecu.edu/archives/bldg_history.cfm?id=65).

Since those early days, the staff at GTC has worked with students from several undergraduate and graduate disciplines including special education, psychology, child development and family relations as well as the allied health professions. Since the development of the School of Medicine, medical students, residents and fellows from the departments of psychiatry and pediatrics have rotated through the center on a regular basis.

The clinical training of others has always been an assumption of service at the center. Therefore, the staff at GTC were delighted to receive **The Brody School of Medicine Program of the Year Award for Excellence in Outstanding Teaching within the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Program**. It is a pleasure to provide professionals so interested in people with autism spectrum disorders and their families with an experience that is valued and now recognized.



## Gastonia TEACCH reaches out to School System Autism Specialists

By Nancy Dartnall

For four of the past five years, the Gastonia TEACCH Center has held regular meetings for personnel in the fourteen school districts the Center serves who are designated to work with students on the autism spectrum, primarily in support capacities. At least six of our fourteen districts have taken advantage of this free resource. The meetings are a chance for school staff to network and brainstorm with each other, share information about new resources, as well as talk with TEACCH staff about ideas for handling puzzling situations with students on the spectrum. Participants are well aware of confidentiality and have said they welcome the time to ask questions about students, diagnostic testing methods, training courses, and communication among IEP team members. Personnel attending have included a number of School Psychologists, Special Education teachers, Speech Therapists and others on school diagnostic teams, Educational Diagnosticians, Program Specialists, and a Special Education Director. These meetings allow our one Center to reach a number of constituents at

once, like a group consultation instead of single individual consultations. As travel became more expensive and caseloads of personnel increased with cutbacks in staff, the frequency of meetings was decreased from monthly to quarterly in 2009-2010. We are looking forward to our first meeting, of the 2010-2011 school year in October.







## Medical/Legal Office Degree Candidates Train at Gastonia TEACCH

By Nancy Dartnall

Gaston College in Dallas, NC has large and successful certificate and degree programs in Medical and Legal Office Administration. Five years ago, as the paperwork and calls at the Gastonia TEACCH Center increased and the personnel did not, and as a way to give back to her profession and the community, Office Manager Vivian McIntyre, a Certified Education Office Professional (CEOP) through the National and North Carolina Association of Education Office Professionals (NAEOP and NCAEOP), contacted the Director of the Co-operative Education Program at Gaston College. Thus began a successful training partnership. Over those five years, Vivian and Gastonia TEACCH have offered office training worksites to five students from Gaston College. While working at TEACCH, the students learn filing, office protocol, reception and telephone answering skills, and the critically important understanding of the confidentiality of clients' Personal Health Information and other HIPAA regulations. The students have been quick to learn and with Vivian's guidance, have contributed greatly to the smooth operation of the Center by keeping records filed, answering the phone, greeting families and visitors, preparing handouts for our training workshops, and contributing to special projects like preparing fundraiser mailings and organizing donated children's videos.



Does the degree and work training pay off? We think so, as Michelle Williamson, whom we met in our first encounter with the Co-operative Education Program, has been working for us in a position funded through training income since graduating in 2006, with her degree in Medical Office Administration and a certificate in Medical Transcription.

## TEACCH Supported Employment Program Recognized

By S. Michael Chapman

The Division TEACCH Supported Employment Program has been providing services to individuals with autism in certain parts of the states for over twenty years. The Program has helped more than 400 North Carolina citizens with autism find jobs in competitive employment around the state. Just recently, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, SEDL, completed a nationwide search and recognized Division TEACCH's Supported Employment Program as one of three effective employment models that helps individuals with autism obtain and maintain employment.

The SEDL Project, "Vocational Rehabilitation Service Models of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders", was developed to identify effective employment service models for adults with autism and to disseminate its findings through its website, [www.autism.sedl.org](http://www.autism.sedl.org), webcasts, newsletters and research. The Project is funded through the National Institute on Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

The initial search for effective programs started with SEDL contacting state vocational rehabilitation offices and asking them to identify programs within their state that they thought were effective in helping adults with autism find employment, eleven programs were nominated and of those, eight submitted extensive self-reviews of their programs. Of those eight, three were chosen as effective model programs. The Supported Employment Program is proud of this recognition and wishes to thank all the people who have supported us through the years. But the real recognition belongs to the employed individuals with ASD who have demonstrated by hard work that they can be and are good employees in businesses across the state of North Carolina. Congratulations to them, they deserve it!



Helen Caroline Falkner,  
Supported Employment's first Client



## Balancing Priorities in Caring for Individuals with ASD: Lessons from Japan

Steve Kroupa, Ph.D., M.A.R., Assistant Professor and Clinical Director Fayetteville TEACCH Center

Three years ago this month I visited Japan for the first time. I was invited to do a series of workshops on the TEACCH approach to working with individuals with ASD. Although this was my first visit, it was one of many collaborations that have taken place between TEACCH and Japanese parents and professionals during the last three decades. Indeed, TEACCH is recognized in Japan as the best known and most effective program for individuals on the autism spectrum. Since that first visit I have been to Japan on other occasions and recently completed a year-long sabbatical at Kyushu University in southern Japan.

During my initial visits to Japan I was a bit overwhelmed by the differences in surroundings, in language, and in customs. As others have noted, traveling to a different culture gives a “neurotypical,” such as myself, a glimpse into what life must be like for someone with autism. I didn’t speak or read or write Japanese, and relatively simple activities (like taking the train or shopping for food) took all of my concentration. I took for granted these relatively “simple” activities when I performed them in the US. In Japan they were much more complex and, at times, stressful.

In ways that might be different for me as compared to someone with ASD, I got used to my changed surroundings fairly quickly. I learned to “read” the visual cues (e.g., picture menus, subway maps), and I found other ways (e.g., using gestures and drawing pictures) to reach out to others and ask for help. And, although I am sure I unintentionally “offended” many people with my inappropriate behavior (e.g., using chopsticks like a knife, or gesturing for women to go through doors first), I learned to be polite according to Japanese expectations. It was when I got to know some Japanese children with ASD and their families that the dramatic differences between my native and new cultures began to melt away, and the challenges and the emotions and the hopes of these children and these families returned me to a very familiar “place,” a place that every child and every parent of a child with ASD visits every day.



Proud graduates of Kyushu University's clinical psychology program pose with visiting professor Dr. Steve Kroupa of the Fayetteville TEACCH Center.

What I learned from my time in Japan is that not only are the concerns and the priorities of parents of a child with special needs similar to those of parents in the US, but that cultural factors shape the way that parents try to strike a healthy balance in the lives of their families. Every culture tries to balance the requirements of society against the needs of the individual. In Japan, like most Asian cultures, the scale is tilted a little more toward maintaining social harmony and achieving group goals than it is toward encouraging individual expression and accomplishment. As one can imagine, a person with ASD presents some real challenges to the Japanese order of things. Consequently, Japanese society may be especially “sensitive” to some of the inappropriate behaviors associated with autism, but Japanese mothers, in particular, are incredibly patient and caring in their attempts to teach young children with autism good manners. Although there is less tolerance for impolite behavior in Japan (especially for older children) than in the US, some Japanese children with ASD tend to be a little bit better behaved than children with autism in the US. In contrast, US schools seem to be more flexible in working with middle and high school students who learn differently.

For years, many of us in the TEACCH program have been impressed with how eager Japanese parents and professionals have been to learn about the TEACCH approach. The Japanese affinity for structure and for incorporating visual cues, and their compassion for children with special needs seems to fit very well with the TEACCH philosophy. For parents of children with ASD in Japan and the US, the goal seems to be the same—trying to find some kind of balance so that everyone in the family can develop to their fullest potential. Even though the different cultures may put the balance point between competing demands in slightly different places, families from both cultures make heroic efforts to find this elusive balance.



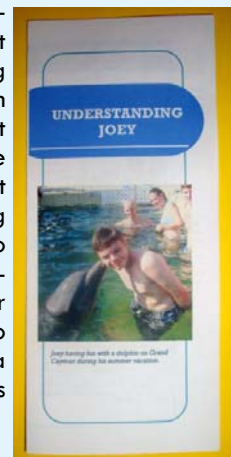
## A Parent's Perspective: The Joey Show

by Linda Varblow



Joey and his parents on a family vacation

The decision to share your child's diagnosis with their peers is a very personal one. Once that information is out there, there is no way to take it back. For many families, this decision is very difficult to make. For my family, the decision was fairly easy. My son Joey is very smart, and has always been fully included in regular education, but he also has a large dose of autism. We saw early on that he was always going to be very much behind his peers in social skills. He also has a language processing delay and has never been able to keep up with the fast paced communication of his peers. When we saw the social gap starting to widen in second and third grade, we started making plans to share his autism with his classmates. We started by talking about differences and reading the class a book about a friend with autism. When Joey was in the fourth grade, we made a booklet about Joey and his autism. The booklet included pictures of Joey doing things that his peers also like to do, to show that even though he was very different from them, he also had lots of things in common with them. In fifth grade, we updated the book and Joey and I read it to all of the fifth grade classes in his school. Our reasoning was the more students understood about Joey in fifth grade, the better off he would be in the transition to sixth grade. Joey has always been comfortable with his autism and has enjoyed sharing his story with his classmates. We continued sharing his story in middle school, going to all of his classes each year with an updated booklet. Joey has always been treated kindly by these children. He has never been bullied in the traditional sense. Sure, I have noticed kids rolling their eyes at him, but I have seen even more instances of children being nice to him at school and in the community. Joey is now in the eleventh grade and we still share his story. The booklet has become a short pamphlet, because most of the kids have heard the story several times. A parent came up to me at Open House last year and remarked that she enjoys seeing the information every year and understands why we still do it. She said "the kids all know Joey – but he has new teachers every year that need to hear the story". We have never regretted our decision to do "The Joey Show". I have no doubt that it has made his life easier in school. He is a happy kid who is accepted by his peers who respect his strengths and accommodate his weaknesses.

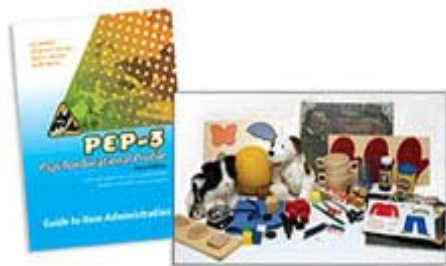


## The Psychoeducational Profile-Third Edition (PEP-3)

Lee M. Marcus, Ph.D., Consulting Psychologist, TEACCH

The Psychoeducational Profile-Third Edition (PEP-3) is the most recent revision of the original PEP, developed by Eric Schopler and Bob Reichler nearly forty years ago. At that time, children with autism were often considered "untestable" and there were no tests available to accurately assess their skills. Drs. Schopler and Reichler filled that breach by developing an assessment scale that not only allowed for meaningful and reliable measures of skills across critical areas of functioning, but also provided information on behaviors specific to autism and to help with individualized programming. Although many tests have been developed over the years, the PEP remains unique

because of its ability to integrate developmental and behavioral information and its practical application to clinical and educational settings. The original PEP and its revisions have been translated into many languages (most recently French) and used widely around the world. The test can be given to chronologically older infants through early elementary age or older children who function below chronological age. The current revision has improved psychometric properties from earlier versions. Although the field of autism has changed dramatically in the past four decades since the PEP was introduced, the need for a flexible, structured, and developmentally-based assessment tool for children with autism remains important and the PEP continues to serve this purpose well. For more information about the PEP, go to [www.proedinc.com/customer/ProductView.aspx?ID=3577](http://www.proedinc.com/customer/ProductView.aspx?ID=3577).

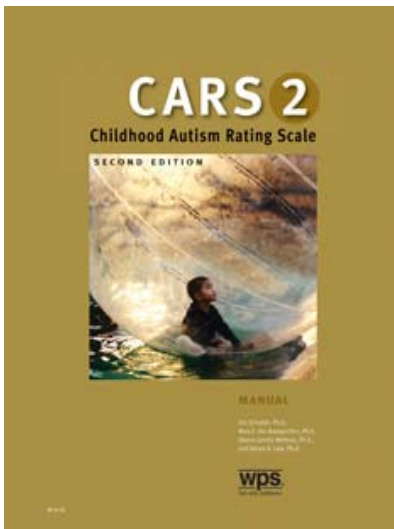






## Childhood Autism Rating Scale, Second Edition (CARS2)

by Eric Schopler, Ph.D., Mary E. Van Bourgondien, Ph.D., Glenna Janette Wellman, Ph.D., and Steven R. Love, Ph.D.



In February, 2010, the CARS- Second Edition was published by Western Psychological Services (WPS). Since its original publication, the CARS has become one of the most widely used and empirically validated autism assessments. It has proven especially effective in discriminating between children with autism and those with severe cognitive deficits, and in distinguishing mild-to-moderate from severe autism.

Now a revised Second Edition expands the test's clinical value, making it more responsive to individuals on the "high-functioning" end of the autism spectrum--those with average or higher IQ scores, better verbal skills, and more subtle social and behavioral deficits. While retaining the simplicity, brevity, and clarity of the original test, the CARS2 adds forms and features that help integrate diagnostic information, determine functional capabilities, provide feedback to parents, and design targeted intervention.

The publication of this latest version of the CARS is especially meaningful for those of us at TEACCH as this was one of the last projects that Eric Schopler was involved in before his death. The fact that the original version of the CARS continues to be one of the most reliable and valid measures of autism in the literature is a tribute to Eric's vision and ability to look beyond current fads or fashions and to base the measure on research that will stand the test of time. This same care and empirical approach was applied to the development of the newest edition.

**On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, TEACCH will be holding a one day training on the CARS2 highlighting the newest aspect of this measure: the CARS- High Functioning version. Visit [www.teacch.com/trainings](http://www.teacch.com/trainings) for details.**

The CARS2 includes three forms:

- **Standard Version Rating Booklet (CARS2-ST)**  
Equivalent to the original CARS; for use with individuals younger than six years of age and those with communication difficulties or below-average estimated IQs.
- **High-Functioning Version Rating Booklet (CARS2-HF)**  
An alternative for assessing verbally fluent individuals, six years of age and older, with IQ scores above 80.
- **Questionnaire for Parents or Caregivers (CARS2-QPC)**  
An un-scored scale that gathers information for use in making CARS2-ST and CARS2-HF ratings.

Items on the Standard form duplicate those on the original CARS, while items on the HF form have been modified to reflect current research on the characteristics of people with high functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome.

### The Questionnaire for Parents or Caregivers

The CARS2-QPC is an unscored form completed by the parent or caregiver of the individual being assessed. Its purpose is to give the clinician more information on which to base CARS2-ST or CARS2-HF ratings. Often the questionnaire serves as the framework for a follow-up interview, during which the clinician can clarify and interpret the responses provided by the parent or caregiver. The areas covered by the CARS2-QPC include the individual's early development; social, emotional, and communication skills; repetitive behaviors; play and routines; and unusual sensory interests.

**The Best Way to Inform and Support Diagnosis—** The new CARS2 is extremely useful in identifying symptoms of autism:

1. It covers the entire autism spectrum, as defined by empirical research.
2. It is based on decades of use with thousands of referred individuals.
3. It assesses virtually all ages and functional levels.
4. It provides concise, objective, and quantifiable ratings based on direct behavioral observation.
5. Scores show a consistent, strong, positive, and specific relationship with autism diagnosis.
6. Ratings are reliable across time, settings, sources of information, and raters.

With a new form for higher-functioning individuals, a structured way to gather caregiver information and guidelines linking scores to intervention, the CARS2 continues to be one of the best autism assessments available.



## Training Highlights

By Roger Cox

TEACCH has a long and distinguished history of offering quality clinical services to clients with autism and their family members, and of offering exemplary training programs to professionals. The recent administrative changes at TEACCH have resulted in a renewed commitment by faculty and staff to both our services to clients and families and to our training programs.

We have focused on the values taught to us by the TEACCH founder Eric Schopler. Eric showed us how to serve with sensitivity, commitment, and dedication. I remember one evening at a conference heading out to dinner with Eric when a mother stopped Eric in the lobby hotel and asked to talk to him. He told me to go ahead and he would catch up. He never made dinner. When I returned to the hotel two hours later, Eric was still there talking to that mom. We remember that type of leadership as we deal with the current challenges. It is an inspiration to our faculty and staff alike.



Our 2010 summer training program served 200 people in Chapel Hill and another 100-150 through our regional centers. We had participants from North Carolina, states across the United States as well as many international people. Because of budget concerns, we reduced costs significantly but maintained the highest quality of training. Ratings in Chapel Hill were as high as we have ever received. We recently completed a three day advanced topics workshop which was attended by North Carolina and international participants (who accounted for 50% of those enrolled).

We are focused on maintaining our course quality but also on adding new offerings and better utilizing technology to reach people in new ways. On line courses, webinars and interactive video-conferencing are all being considered. As we plan the 2011 calendar year, we expect to continue our valued trainings including our summer week-long sessions and our advanced topics seminars. But we hope to put a renewed focus on activities specifically designed for North Carolina professionals and parents. I hope we can offer regional inservice conferences for North Carolina teachers and residential care workers. I see statewide network organizations forming to develop new collaborations for families and service providers. We want to focus on new offerings targeting real problems being addressed by professionals in North Carolina this year.

Change is never easy, but with the right attitude and the right values, we expect TEACCH Training to expand offerings and maintain quality in the next year. Eric Schopler would expect us to do that.

For information on upcoming trainings, please go to [www.teacch.com/trainings](http://www.teacch.com/trainings)

## Psychology 507: Autism

By Gladys Williams

Since 2000, TEACCH has offered a unique service-learning course on autism in the Department of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Taught by Gladys Williams, Ph.D., a member of the TEACCH faculty, it was developed with assistance from a Ueltschi Service-Learning Course Development Grant. The class is also part of the UNC APPLES program, which supports experiential programs to foster students' social awareness and civic engagement. Psychology 507 consistently receives student ratings in the top ten percent of psychology courses, and Gladys received the APPLES 2005 Excellence in Teaching Award.

In the class, coursework is combined with experience. Each spring, fifteen eager UNC students go out into the community to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorders. They help in public school classrooms, families' homes, college campuses, work sites, group homes, and TEACCH activities. Over the course of the semester, each student works, with supervision, for thirty three hours, learning about autism first-hand, gaining skills, and providing valuable assistance. (continued)





## Psychology 507: Autism (continued)

By Gladys Williams

Back at the university, the seminar has two major sections. At the start of the semester, students gain historical, family, and life-span perspectives on autism spectrum disorders. They learn about issues in classification and diagnosis, theories and research about causes, and patterns of functioning. As the semester continues, intervention approaches and issues in service provision are emphasized. Guest lectures from professionals, parents, and researchers bring topics to life. Class discussions, assignments, and reflections on the readings are rich and exciting, fueled by the students' own experiences. The students leave the semester with knowledge, experience and a deep appreciation of the individuals on the autism spectrum.



## Jake Nelson Raleigh TEACCH Fund



Jacob Nelson—Senior year

**Jacob D. Nelson** lived in Clayton in Johnston County. As a preteen, Jake was evaluated by a private psychologist and at TEACCH, and found to have high-functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome. He later participated in middle school and high school social groups at Raleigh TEACCH, making lasting friendships and learning social cues. While he attended Wake Technical Community College, he was also a volunteer for TEACCH, participating in panel discussions and speaking individually before elementary and middle school teachers to explain and answer questions about students with autism. Later in college, Jake participated in the annual high school social group reunions and enjoyed talking with the new high school graduates and their parents about what to expect after high school. Jake was a wonderfully caring young man. He loved to help others in any way that he could. He enjoyed others and never let anyone feel left out.

His other interests included cars, and even as a toddler he could identify the make and model of any car coming down the road. When Jake was young, he created his own city, Carrington, New York, with all the necessities of a successful town, including political drama. Jake loved maps, and whenever anyone needed directions or landmarks, he was the one to go to. He was brilliant and possessed a world of knowledge and facts. He also had a fun side; he loved cartoons, and was an expert on "The Simpsons."

Jake wanted to make educating people about autism a lifelong vocation. He was especially interested in making sure that teachers and administrators protected students with autism from bullying. Sadly, Jake died of post-surgery complications on Aug. 30, 2009, about a month before his 21st birthday. In honor of Jake's memory his parents, Pam and Chris Nelson have started the **Jake Nelson Raleigh TEACCH Fund** through the Medical Foundation at UNC- Chapel Hill. This fund will provide an annual stipend to a practicum student/intern who is learning to work with individuals with autism at the Raleigh TEACCH Center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As part of the practicum experience, the student will participate in a number of clinical experiences, including a social skills group, and will learn how to share information about autism with others. Donations can be sent to the Medical Foundation of the University of North Carolina or to the Raleigh TEACCH Center and should specify the **Jake Nelson Raleigh TEACCH Fund**.



# TEACCH

Treatment and Education of Autistic and other Communication handicapped Children



## TEACCH

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## DONATION INFORMATION

Donations to TEACCH are very welcome and  
should be directed as follows:

TEACCH Fund for Excellence

The Medical Foundation of North Carolina, Inc.

880 MLK Jr. Blvd.

Chapel Hill, NC 27514-2600

### Regional TEACCH Centers

Asheville TEACCH Center  
(828) 251-6319

Chapel Hill TEACCH Center  
(919) 966-5156

Charlotte TEACCH Center  
(704) 563-4103

Fayetteville TEACCH Center  
(910) 437-2517

Gastonia TEACCH Center  
(704) 833-1294

Greensboro TEACCH Center  
(336) 334-5773

Greenville TEACCH Center  
(252) 830-3300

Raleigh TEACCH Center  
(919) 662-4625

Wilmington TEACCH Center  
(910) 251-5700

### TEACCH Programs and Services

Carolina Living and Learning Center  
(919) 542-1910

Early Intervention Services  
(919) 966-7003

Supported Employment  
(919) 966-8194

TEACCH Training Program  
(919) 966-6636

### TEACCH Newsletter

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**Thank you to all of  
the TEACCH Centers  
and Programs for  
contributing articles  
to this newsletter.**

