

hms school news

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy • Founded 1882 • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • JULY 2016

Executive Director's Message

By Diane L. Gallagher, PhD

Encouraging our students; Educating our community. You may have seen these words on some of our fundraising pieces or heard references to them this year. They derive from our strategic plan and our desire to broaden opportunities for our students as well as those who have similar needs but who are not enrolled at HMS. As this school year comes to an end and we celebrate our two graduating students, Marc Riegler and Annie Kramer-Golinkoff, it seems appropriate to reflect upon the opportunities seized this year.



Marc and Annie are preparing to join the larger community as adult participants, confident in their worth and knowledgeable about their capabilities, built over their time at HMS. We wish them success, happiness and a sense of belonging.

This year, we inaugurated a program for our alumni in which we hope Marc and Annie will participate as our newest alumni. During "Alumni Saturdays," former students were invited back to HMS to engage with each other in moderated discussions, art, dance and music therapy. While they were here, we provided wheelchair tune-ups and augmentative communication trouble shooting, and plan to continue these successful Saturdays in the next year.

We also kicked off an educator training exchange through the Low Incidence Collaborative Consortium, a network of like-minded schools for children with significant needs. We were integral to the creation of the Consortium, and this year, hosted the first training exchange, welcoming professionals from the Cotting School in Lexington, Massachusetts to

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Parent's Corner

By Liza Kramer and Michael Golinkoff



Annie is our pride and joy and we are so grateful to HMS for playing such an important role in supporting her zest for learning and life. Our precious Annie has always been feisty and delightfully unconventional and appropriately, her experience at HMS has been much the same. Annie began at HMS as a part-time student, dividing her week between HMS and Haverford High School. It was the perfect arrangement. Each day, Annie awoke with a huge, radiant smile, excited and eager to begin the school day at both schools. She loved the variety.

Then two years ago, Annie became a full time student at HMS. The transition was seamless. All parts of Annie's day brought her immeasurable joy. From the bus ride, to the classroom, the cafeteria, all the therapies, the special classes, and the social activity woven throughout, HMS provided the ideal environment for Annie to flourish, including as an accomplished artist, who has proudly sold her work

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Meet our Class of 2016



Annie Kramer-Golinkoff, 21
Bala Cynwyd, PA
Years at HMS: 2.5 • Day Student

Favorite Part of HMS Experience:

Annie's favorite part of being at HMS was meeting so many wonderful, caring and fun people.

Most Significant Accomplishment at HMS:

For Annie, painting felt like such an important accomplishment. She also tried so many new things like riding the special bicycle. The field trips were also terrific.

Favorite Extracurricular Activities:

Little league (Challenger League) baseball is a highlight of Annie's spring and summer. Annie has also participated in a



theater group and loves putting on plays. She also loves to travel with her family.

What makes Annie Special:

Annie embraces life. She gives all of herself to everything she does. She also loves interpersonal connections. She has so many friends and cherishes each and every one of them.

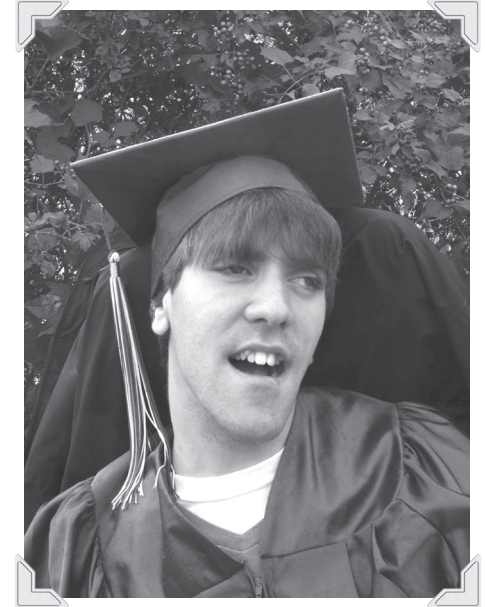
What Annie would tell a new student at HMS:

Participate in everything. Try new challenges. Be really engaged and trust the staff.

Annie's Plans for After HMS: Annie is looking into a combination of special needs programs and volunteer jobs. Annie very much wants to be busy and around people.

What Annie will miss most about HMS:

The personal connections. Everyone associated with HMS was wonderful and was deeply committed to each and every student.



Marc Riegler, 21
Churchville, PA
Years at HMS: 8 • Residential Student

Favorite Part of HMS Experience:

Marc's favorite part of the HMS experience was being there every day and interacting with his friends and the staff. He liked having jobs to do, especially "Marc's Cart" and "Riegler Recycles".

Most Significant Accomplishment at HMS:

Marc's greatest accomplishment was learning to use his communication device to interact with his friends, teachers and caregivers and of course to tell an occasional joke or two. He also learned patience, that everyone has a voice and in turn can express themselves.

Favorite Extracurricular Activities:

At school Marc loved music with Brad! He also enjoyed dance, horseback-riding, playing on the computer or iPad and being secretary of the student government. At home Marc loves to go bowling, going





to the movies, eating at Red Robin and hanging out with his family.

What makes Marc Special: Marc has an amazing personality. He has a light about him that makes people want to be around him. He has a smile that lights up a room and if you're not smiling, he will tell you a joke to brighten up your day! He is our definition of happiness.

What Marc would tell a new student at HMS: Marc would tell a new student to enjoy all the experiences HMS has to offer. HMS will help you to become the best you can be!

Marc's plans after HMS: Marc is waiting to start the next chapter of his

life at the Margaret Moul Home in York, PA, where he will rekindle his friendships with the many former HMS students who live there. Until then he will be attending a day program at Delta a few days a week. When not at the program he will be out and about with his nurse Glen, exploring and having fun- so be on the look-out for them!

What Marc will miss most about HMS: Marc will miss all of his classmates, roommates, therapists, caregivers and teachers Cheryl and Paige. He will miss all the fun he had with everyone during and after school, the laughter and smiles from everyone when he told his jokes and his bus rides with Heath.

In Memorium: Christian Matcovich

HMS mourns the loss of Christian Matcovich, who passed away at the age of 21 on January 2nd 2016. Christian, the son of Robert and Mary, and brother to Joseph and Matthew, served as President of the Student Government and was set to graduate from HMS this year after being with us for more than 10 years. Christian's indomitable spirit was an example for all who knew him, and he was a friend to all who met him. Despite physical challenges caused by cerebral palsy, Christian pursued accomplishments few able bodied individuals attain. In 2010, Christian's art was displayed in Philadelphia's City Hall where he was afforded the opportunity to discuss the Phillies with then-Mayor Nutter. In 2014, he successfully passed his Eagle Board of Review, and attained Scouting's highest rank, "Eagle Scout". Everyone at HMS misses Christian dearly and our halls are truly not the same without his smiling face.



Welcome Joan Brennan

We welcomed Joan to HMS in the summer of 2015 as the Nursing Coordinator. In May of 2016 she took over the Director of Health Services position.

Can you tell us a bit about your professional history?

I received my BSN from Georgetown University and started on my career path in Boston working in both a Surgical ICU and a NICU until I moved to NJ to marry, and worked again in a NICU followed by a job as clinical instructor for an LPN program. After I had our first child we moved to Cumberland County where I worked part time in a NICU and as a supervisor for a Community Hospital. After the birth of our third child we returned to this area and I worked for Bayada as a pediatric complex care nurse. I took a professional leave after the birth of our fifth child to care for our growing family. When I returned to nursing I found my niche in Pediatric Home Care. For four years I provided 1:1 nursing for infants and children with complex genetic, congenital and chronic diagnoses before becoming a supervisor, then clinical director for two agency branches. During those ten years I gained experience, understanding and competence in the care and management of children with challenging medical needs and served as an educator, advocate and healthcare resource to the primary caregivers in their family.

Can you share with us your philosophy of care and communication with students and parents?

I'm not sure that I have a philosophy as much as a few general guidelines or "rules of thumb" when it comes to care and communication.



As to care, I'm a mom, a nana and a nurse – in the caring business so to speak. I am a nurturer and have that expectation of myself and my staff. I want parents and students alike to feel assured that all of us, especially their PCAs, are here to care for them as we would our own. On the clinical side, I expect a competent nursing staff prepared to match their skills with critical thinking and good judgement whenever they are caring for students.

As for communication, I think of myself as a good communicator and, much to my children's dismay, have become a prolific emailer and text messenger. Much of a nurse's responsibility involves good communication – written and verbal – better known as documentation and reporting. The quality and quantity of documentation and reporting circulated among interdisciplinary team members and parents from the HMS nursing team has the potential to foster or hinder successful student outcomes. My personal and professional experiences over the years have revealed that, in most cases, good communication holds the key to coordination, cooperation and compliance.

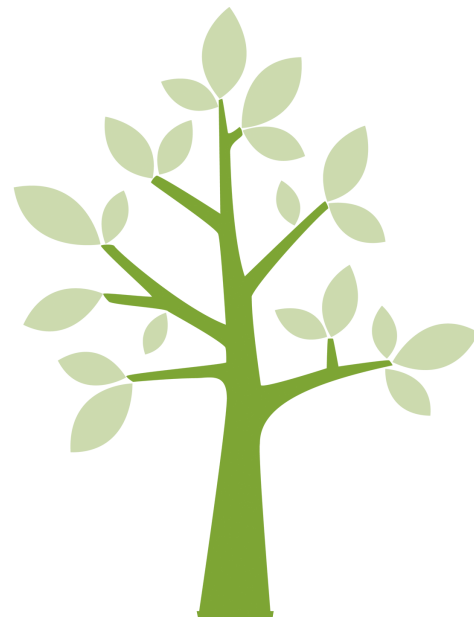
Do you have a particular vision for the nursing department here, certain goals you'll have in mind?

While I'm still getting my feet wet and need to continue to grasp and absorb the full scope of nursing needs at HMS, I do have some thoughts.

My vision is to support, nurture and promote the ongoing strengths of our educational, therapeutic and recreational programs while cultivating a new appreciation, understanding and respect for the substantial role that the school nurse now holds in this student community.

In the 2016-17 school year the health services department will be more structured and supported with the anticipated goal of greater accountability and measurable improvement in the areas of documentation and communication.

I'd like to examine and reconsider a return to some effective approaches used in the past. Our recent decision to expand our caregiver



Welcome Joan Brennan/From page 4

title to that of PCA, Personal Care Assistants, is reflective of my belief that a return to this more nurturing model will better meet our students' daily needs and is well complimented by a greater nursing presence.

Finally, I want to encourage our nurses and PCAs to expand their knowledge and share their experiences through participation in

continuing education seminars, symposiums and conferences.

What do you see as HMS's strengths, and what do you see as HMS's greatest challenge in fulfilling our mission?

HMS has strong and unquestionable history as an educational and therapeutic school for students with disabilities. Its commitment to excellence and independence is steadfast. Our challenge is to maintain the mission and grow the program while keeping step with the changing world and the ever changing, increasingly complex clinical needs of our students.

Parent's Corner

By Lance and Hilary Riegler

We were told about HMS by our pediatrician, who said it would be hard to get into HMS and hard to get our School District to agree to placement. And so it began. Calls were made, letters written, and meetings held. We had Joe Scullin, then of UCP, by our side and HMS willingly providing details of what their program for Marc would look like.

Two years later we pushed Marc up the ramp to the doors of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy — we were scared, but Marc was not. To him, he was going to a new school with a bunch of new people to charm. We were petrified. The school felt so far away being one hour down Route 95! What if the staff are not capable to meet his needs? They are, and they did. What if they can't comb his hair the right way? They can't and they never will! There are some things only a mother can do.

The first year was a learning experience. Marc could be away from us and miss us, we could be away from Marc and miss him. Thank you Rec Dept. for Skype, it made it easier!

The nurses, therapists, teachers, and all of the HMS support staff, could take care of Marc. They took better care of him in some ways than we as parents could. They persevered through his stubbornness, did not give in to his lack of patience, and they did not succumb to those beautiful blue eyes and jokes when he wanted to have his own way.



Marc had fun! He danced, acted, played music, created art, went on trips, and hung out with friends in the evening. Life was good!

The next five years flew by. Marc progressed in so many ways. With the expertise, love and patience of his teachers, therapists, and the HMS community, Marc blossomed. He found his voice with his dynavox. He is a gamer and loves to read. He is a "sit-down" comedian. He loves the Arts, he loves to work, and he is a leader. Life was good at HMS.

Over the next couple of years, Marc continued to grow. He grew into a young man with patience, compassion, leadership skills, and

Parent's Corner: Marc/From page 5

a great sense of humor. Things began to change for us as parents. Waivers, Transition, ID Cards, Registration for Selective Service, and after age 21, placement. Our heads were spinning. Thank you Social Work and Education Departments for helping us navigate the crazy, ever-changing system. Decisions needed to be made, he was rapidly approaching 21, it was not so far away anymore. How could Marc and our family exist without HMS? Life was good, but becoming different.

And there it was, our last IEP meeting, with our extended family sitting at the conference table smiling, laughing, and crying. Decisions were made, Waiver obtained, placement decided, transition almost completed. Life was good, but a little sad.

The year 2015 became 2016 and a New Year with graduation buzz was in the air! Marc was excited! Autograph books to sign, photos to sort through for the graduation ceremony, plans to finalize, and time to prepare to let go.

Graduation is here! Time to celebrate all of Marc's accomplishments. Time to thank everyone on Marc's team throughout the years, for helping him to strive towards the best that he can be.

On the day of his graduation from HMS, we pushed Marc down the ramp of the HMS School. We were scared. Marc was not.

Today Marc starts a new chapter in his life and we start a new one in ours. Each and every one of you has touched our lives and prepared us for this day. We are ready.

Life is good! Thank you HMS!

All our Love, The Riegler Family

Parent's Corner: Annie/From page 1

through charity auctions.

We can never adequately express our thanks to HMS for building a community that honored Annie's spirit, appreciated her humor and zest, cultivated her potential, and most of all, treated her with a degree of humanity and dignity that everybody should be lucky enough to have. We know that our firecracker Annie is on to big things in life. We will always credit HMS with empowering her to take on the world, spread her sunshine, and have the best time along the way.

Annie, we are beaming with pride, and HMS, we are so grateful.

Director's Message/From page 1

HMS. Next year, members of our team will travel there.

Additionally, we collaborated with Nemours Children's Health in Delaware on development of content for its revised website, www.kidshealth.org. We opened our doors to them while they created videos for their site, and provided insight and data about cerebral palsy to educate their community.

Our staff traveled far beyond Pennsylvania, across the nation, sharing their expertise and research with educators, therapists and parents at conferences and symposiums. We can only educate a small percentage of students with complex needs at HMS, but our team's professional education efforts multiply our impact on the community of students throughout the country.

Closer to home, we participated in outreach to educate those outside our HMS community about our students and their abilities. Student art hangs on the walls of City Hall and was on display at the Wells Fargo Center during a 76er's game, as well as in the gallery of the Comcast building and offices throughout the region through our ongoing partnership with Fresh Artists. This summer, we will be visible during the Democratic National Convention, raising the awareness of its participants from across the country about our students' capabilities, and the ways they can support our students' education.

In the midst of this year of growth, our community suffered a grave loss over December Holiday break: the death of a beloved student, Christian Matcovich. Just over a year ago, we helped Christian celebrate the achievement of his lifelong goal of becoming an Eagle Scout. Christian left behind many friends at HMS, and is missed by our team, particularly his teacher and mentor, Kevin Rafferty. Christian's parents Mary and Robert will always remain part of our family.

Christian will be remembered as an example of what our students can achieve when their dreams are listened to and given support.

Wishing you a busy, happy summer.

Using our Expertise to Educate Others

At HMS we're proud to be a leader in the care and education of school-aged children with complex disabilities. In support of that role, our therapists and educators are involved in state-of-the-art treatment and research inside and outside of the classroom. Throughout the year, they speak at professional conferences and publish findings in peer-reviewed journals. What they learn and share helps children far beyond our walls. Here's a sampling of what they did this past school year.

Christina R. Coia, M.Ed. Director of Education & Ellen Becker, MSW, LSW, Former Transition Specialist

At the 2015 Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) National Conference in St. Louis, Chris and Ellen were part of a panel that discussed various aspects and approaches to transition. They presented on the development of transition-to-adulthood programs designed for students with physical, health and multiple disabilities. Included was discussion about the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the transition process, along with the curriculum activities our students engage in, IEP questions, instructional resources, Functional Life Skills Group activities, volunteer placement experiences, personalized transition book development, transitional assessments and other specialized adaptations for this unique population of students ages 14-22.

Even within this low incidence representation, HMS students include the most medically and physically complex students, making Chris and Ellen uniquely positioned with their expertise.

For more information about our transition program, please contact: please contact Christina Coia at 215 222-2566 x111.



Annabeth Martino, MS, OTR/L and Jacqueline S. Rowland, M.Ed., M.S. CCC/SLP

This summer, Jackie Rowland and Annabeth Martino will present at the 2016 International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) Conference in Toronto. They will provide their unique perspectives on the successes and challenges of ongoing AAC system development using the teamwork model found at HMS School. When developing an individualized AAC system for children with complex communication needs, it is imperative to take a collaborative approach to assessment, intervention and ongoing development in order to yield optimal results. Every member of the team will provide analysis of their unique role during evaluation, design, and intervention process. Jackie has specialized training and skills in assessing expressive and receptive language skills and determining communication needs. She has knowledge of AAC technology, language development, vocabulary selection and organization, as well as related evidence-based practice. Annabeth has training in the assessment of successful access methods, based on a multi-sensory approach within the environmental context of the child. This includes development of purposeful, energy-conserving movement patterns, which provide consistent and accurate switch access for communication.

Kathleen Paul, PT, MHS, ATP; Elizabeth Patchell, PT, DPT; and Candice McNamee, PT, DPT

This past April, members of the HMS Physical Therapy team, along with an Assistive Technology Professional from Nu-motion, presented at the annual in-service day at Theraplay, an outpatient clinic with multiple locations that provides pediatric therapy services in a play environment.

Their course, titled "All About that Base", provided therapists with an in-depth understanding of how to properly assess a child's hips and pelvis to address postural and functional needs while acquiring a custom seating system. The course covered an anatomical review of the hips and pelvis along with how tone affects seating management, how to conduct a comprehensive mat assessment, appropriate cushion selection, and practice session to apply skills learned to perform a complete evaluation, assessment and recommendation for proper pelvic alignment for seating.

HMS's mission of promoting independence and improving the quality of life for youth with complex disabilities can only be attained by making sure our service providers are specialists in their specific field. By engaging with other professionals who are specialists in their fields throughout the year, they are able to expand that expertise and network with others facing similar challenges. By presenting at professional conferences, they are able to not only share their knowledge to help other students, but to keep HMS on the map for our renowned success in maximizing the achievements of our students.



4400 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

HMS School News | Graduation 2016

A publication of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, dedicated to reporting about student life, school programs and important events.

Marie Logue | *President of the Board of Trustees*

Diane Gallagher Ph.D. | *Executive Director*

4400 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215/222-2566; fax 215/222-1889

www.hmsschool.org

HMS School is nonsectarian, admitting/serving students from any locality without regard to race, color, religion, disability [except as limited by PDE program approvals], ancestry, national origin, including limited English proficiency, age [within school ages] or gender.

HMS School educates, nurtures, and cares for children and young adults with complex physical disabilities resulting from cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury or other neurological impairments, with the goal of enabling each to reach his or her maximum potential. We promote independence and improve the quality of life for youth in a safe and secure environment so each can lead a fulfilling, stimulating life now and as an adult.

Please consider a gift to HMS School through your organization's United Way campaign by designating HMS as the recipient. HMS is #00240 on the donor choice form for the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey and is listed on the UW website, www.uwsepa.org. HMS is also eligible to receive United Way funds from other regions.

Award for Caregiving Excellence

This year's winner of the HMS School "Mary Ann Wilson Award for Caregiving Excellence" went to **Talaya Crocker**, a seasoned CNA here at HMS. Nominated for many reasons, from her pleasant and caring nature, to her diligence in her care, to her ability to communicate with parents in a positive and clear manner, Talaya is well respected by others for her exceptional care. Talaya attends team meetings and IEPs while always representing her team and HMS in a positive manner. She is an active participant of the Safety Committee and she goes out of her way to provide each student she works with, with the personal care they need. She is able to move between teams and provide a high level of professional and personalized care to any student. Congratulations to Talaya!



"No matter what you ask Talaya to do she will always do it with a smile on her face." — Anita Rickards

"Talaya is always on point with the unique care each student needs. She is the person I want to take care of me." — Lauren Dukes