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BECOMING YOUR BEST

Stories Of Hope And Encouragement About Individuals With Disabilities

Becoming Your Best Newsletter

I recently read a wonderful statement by professor, lecturer, and author Dr. Leo Buscaglia. He said, "The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no tickertape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our encouragement, who will need our unique talents. Someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we had to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt."

This statement by Dr. Buscaglia certainly "paints a picture" of how important each of us can be in impacting someone else's life. Each day we should continually be asking ourselves how can we make a difference. Not just making a difference, but making a "positive" difference.

Certainly we have all suffered the effects of someone's negative impact on our lives. In those type of situations, our emotions will take us to places we do not want to be—if we allow them to.

Seek ways to encourage and inspire others in positive ways that will help them to feel better about themselves and motivate them to more worthy endeavors. Use your talents, abilities, gifts, and skills to make a positive impact on everyone with whom you may come into contact on a daily basis. As you help others to become their best, you will be helping yourself to become your best.

We trust you will find the Becoming Your Best Newsletter and website inspirational and uplifting to you and will impact you in a positive way!

Send your inspiring stories to: stories@becomingyourbest.com.

Subscribe to our FREE newsletter—e-mail: newsletter@becomingyourbest.com

The photograph of the eagle is by Bob Sumners. See his work at: www.shootthebeach.com.

Mission:

We are dedicated to presenting inspiring stories of hope and encouragement about individuals with disabilities.

These stories of success are meant to provide support and the keys to "Becoming Your Best!"

Thank you for your stories and your support!

George M. Graham Jr.

INSPIRED TEACHER PENS BOOK FOR KIDS WITH ADHD by Laura Oleniacz (This article was posted 4-29-10 on the www.ENCToday.com website.)

Preschool teacher Stephanie Poindexter was inspired by the progress made by one of her students who, at first, never seemed to be able to sit still in class. Poindexter used that inspiration to write and self-publish a book to help children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder stay on task.

The J.T. Barber Elementary School teacher's book, "Octavious and his Busy Tentacles," tells the story of an octopus with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The octopus learns to keep his "busy tentacles" still so he does not fidget in class, so he can wait his turn during games, and so he can remember all his school work.

Poindexter is a preschool teacher for children with autism, attention deficit disorder and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, as well as More at Four program students.

She was inspired to pen the work by 5-year old Anthony Hill, who is autistic and could never sit still. She found ways to help him, such as letting him sit in a rocking chair to stay focused, and making check-lists to help him remember all of his work.

"His arms were always going, his feet were always going, he couldn't sit on the floor in crisscross like the other kids, he couldn't sit in a little cubby chair because he was just moving so much," Poindexter said. "He struggled a lot last year, and this year, he's amazing."

Anthony's mother, Nikia Hill, said he's made "tremendous progress," and doesn't have to use the rocking chair any more.

"If they get a teacher like Ms. Poindexter, (and with the parents) not being in denial, and willing to help their child, anything is possible," Hill said. "I love the book, it really explains how he really was."

Poindexter sat down to write the book when she couldn't sit still herself while on maternity leave for four months. She said she had tried to submit her idea to a few publishing companies, but she got responses such as "thanks, but we don't really cater to special needs subjects."

So she self-published it on the Web site lulu.com.

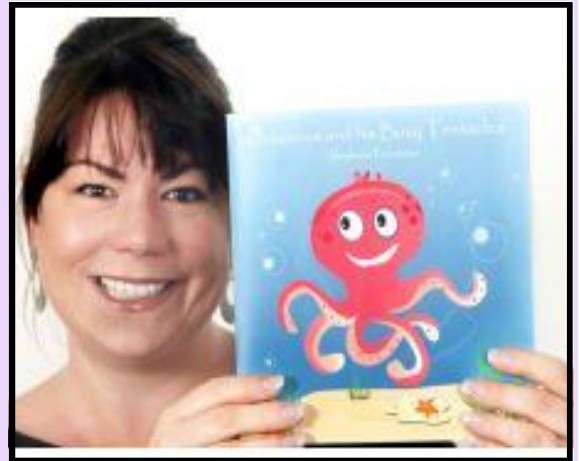
She chose the ocean theme for the book because of her love of all things aquatic, and it wasn't the first time her ocean and teaching interests have converged.

She discovered her love of working with children with special needs while volunteering at a dolphin-assisted therapy program one summer as a student at the University of South Carolina.

A teenager with autism came to the center to swim with the dolphins, but he would not come out of his family's recreational vehicle for the program. Poindexter thought she could help. She went to see him, introduced herself slowly, and showed him a videotape of children swimming with dolphins.

"His face just brightened up, he got really excited when he saw the dolphins, and he put his hand in mine, and off we went," she said. "Something just clicked, it was pretty amazing."

She later worked in children's water therapy for an adaptive aquatics program in Charleston, S.C., and started a dolphin-assisted therapy program at SeaWorld in San Diego, California. She also worked for TEACCH Autism Program in Greenville, which stand for Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children.



Stephanie Poindexter, a preschool teacher at J.T. Barber Elementary School, recently self-published the book [Octavious and his Busy Tentacles](#), which helps children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder concentrate. Photo by Byron Holland.

“INSPIRED TEACHER...” CONTINUED

She said she hopes her book helps children help themselves to be successful.

“(The point of the book is) to empower the kids to take responsibility,” she said. “A simple book like this, it’s a simple step, they can read it, and say, ‘oh this is something I can do.’”

Sue Lee, a pediatrician at Pamlico Pediatrics, said she bought 20 of the books to hand out to parents and children. She said helping children address issues through reading — called bibliotherapy — needs to be expanded.

“A lot of times, reading about a character is a wonderful way to put a thought to a child that they’re struggling with in context,” Lee said. “I love this book. The idea of an eight-armed octopus with ADHD really resonates with me.”

We would like to thank Laura Oleniacz (writer), Byron Holland (photo) and ENCToday.com for their permission to use this article in our newsletter and on our website. We also would like to thank Stephanie Poindexter for her permission to use the article and congratulate her on writing/publishing her book. We wish her the best!

J.T. Barber Elementary School is part of the Craven County Schools in New Bern, N.C.

If you wish to order copies of [Octavious and his Busy Tentacles](#), you may do so through our website at www.becomingyourbest.com or by going directly to www.lulu.com.

“An Innovative Way to Help ADHD Kids Control Extra Energy” by Donna Krutka, MD

A Doctor’s Personal Take on ADHD from the ADHD Blog on the www.everydayhealth.com website.

The concept of circuit training is a well-known fitness strategy. It is made up of multiple stations of different levels of conditioning exercises to be executed in a rapid continuous fashion. It provides variety, challenge, and ultimately, conditioning.

There is high energy level involved with the ADHD Child and managing this energy can be problematic. It is always wise to harness and redirect this energy instead of trying to arrest it. So, what is a parent or teacher to do? What if an ADHD circuit training course were set up to manage the energy? Let’s see what this might involve.

The first step is to identify a time of day or a situation that seems to bring on the hyperactivity. There may be multiple examples through the day when this occurs.

The second step is to define the spatial area that you have to set up your circuit training to manage the hyperactivity. An example may be the bedroom of the child, the entire house, or the backyard. If the child is out and about, the area may be smaller, such as a small area of a waiting room or a check out line.

The third step is to identify the time that is available. It might be in the morning before school, or the time it takes to prepare dinner after school. It might be at an unexpected moment of delay, when patience is needed to handle the delay.

The fourth and very critical step is identifying the involvement of the parent or teacher. Many situations require one on one involvement, whereas other times unsupervised activities are going to work.

Dr. Krutka is a board-certified pediatrician who works in private practice in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her practice includes all ages of patients from newborns to young adults. Her areas of interest include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, adolescent gynecology and sports medicine. She attended the University of Missouri Medical School and did her residency at UCLA Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, California.



"AN INNOVATIVE WAY ..." CONTINUED

So let's get started with scenarios:

Mornings: Sometimes an ADHD child has not slept well or had a hard time going to sleep (which is very common) and is very sleepy at wakeup time. The wake up of the child could be considered the warm up of the training. Put together a CD with music that is first rather soft and slow, and follow with songs that build the tempo and pace. Allow five to ten minutes for this warm up. This is a time when the parent may be going in and out of the child's room to periodically check on how the process is going.

Next, the child may want to drink some water and take the ADHD medication. Here is where deep breathing drills could be used to wake up the brain and start to turn on the thinking part of the brain. A parent needs to be there for this process and this might take two to three minutes.

Now the muscles need to be activated. Marching around the room or around the house can be fun and the child should be encouraged that this IS fun. Getting other siblings involved with this process would also work. This might take five minutes or even longer if you have the time. Throw in some jumping jacks or running in place. By this time, the child should be awake and starting to become active.

The next phase involves the speed drills. Set out the clothes all around the room. For example, have the underwear and undershirt at one station in the room, the pants and over shirt at another station, and the shoes and socks at another location. Tell the child that you are going to time each segment and record the total time. Record the times and let them know what they are. As they become more cooperative with this process, let them know that they are getting faster or slower. If this process is made fun and creative, the more cooperation will occur.

Add additional stations in the morning routine. Make it simple, but fun. After all of the morning routine is accomplished, the reward could be breakfast. Always make sure a child with ADHS eats breakfast. That is the meal that they need the most and it should include the most nutritious foods of the day, because often it is the only good meal they eat in the day.

Standing in a check out line:

This is an example of a small space and a small but critical time period. A suggestion would be have the child stand on one leg for five seconds, switch legs for five seconds, count backwards from 25 as fast as they can (or pick a number that they have mastered) , state their name, address, telephone number as fast as they can, and then start over. Often the key to the cooperation of the child is practicing this session often and before it is needed in the critical situation. Be creative and remember to make it challenging and fun.

Bedtime circuits can also be developed, but with the "cool down" coming at the end of the period of time. Remember, a routine schedule is critical to the child with ADHD, and in time, they will look forward to the process and hopefully embrace the technique. If the routine needs to be shortened due to "busy schedule" circumstances, don't skip the routine. Announce beforehand that the time involved will have to be shortened, and then take the child through a shortened version. Remember, taking a routine out of a child's schedule will throw the child "off balance" and cause behavior that is unexpected and negative.

Good luck, and have fun developing the ADHD circuit training.

We would like to thank Dr. Krutka for her permission to use her blog article in our newsletter and on our website. You can find many other excellent articles by Dr. Krutka by going to the www.everydayhealth.com website and clicking on ADHD Blog.

Visit our website at www.becomingyourbest.com to find past issues of the Becoming Your Best Newsletter, as well as accessing other inspirational stories and video clips. We would love for you to share your story with our readers. Please submit to stories@becomingyourbest.com.