



Morrissey~Compton Spring 2014 Newsletter

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A Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of Morrissey-Compton,

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter. 2013 proved to be a very successful year for us and we are anticipating 2014 to be an exciting and successful one as well. As many of you know, our main office in Palo Alto will be moving to a new location due to the planned demolition of the 2555 Park Blvd building that has been our home for approximately 30 years. We do not have a new location secured yet, but we are actively searching. We will keep you informed of our relocation plans. In the meantime, we continue to provide our full range of services including diagnostic evaluations, educational therapy, psychotherapy, group therapy, parent education, and consultations, as well as our summer school program – Challenge School, our 33rd year of operation!

We continue to grow at Morrissey-Compton. During the past few months, we've added some new staff members to broaden our services and improve our fund development program. Dr. Surina Basho, an expert in the area of executive functioning, has joined our staff as an educational therapist and Director of Research to build our services for students with executive functioning challenges, as well as to establish a cognitive-behavioral research program at our center. We are also pleased to welcome Lyn Balistreri as our new Director of Fund Development. She brings to Morrissey-Compton a wealth of experience in this area and we are excited to have her on staff to help us with fundraising activities.

As a community-based clinic, we strive to build collaborative relationships with local organizations, schools, and institutions. This edition details some of the relationships we have established with Packard Children's Hospital, Synapse School, and Santa Clara County's Project YEA ("Youth Education Advocates") in their Educational Rights Project in collaboration with LACY (Legal Advocates for Children and Youth). We are very proud of these partnerships that provide opportunities to broaden our reach in serving families on the Peninsula.

We are also committed to regularly evaluating and developing new services to benefit students. One such program is Interactive Metronome, a tool used by Dr. Raymond Jones, an educational therapist on our staff, in his work with students. In this edition, Dr. Jones describes a success story using this intervention. Look to our future newsletters for other exciting programs that are currently in the planning stages.

We are very grateful to our supporters who allow us to continue our mission of enabling children and adults with other school related difficulties to achieve their goals by providing the highest quality diagnostic and intervention services in a supportive environment. We thank you for your support!

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Welcome Dr. Surina Basho!

Morrissey-Compton Educational Center is proud to welcome Surina Basho, Ph.D. to our staff. Dr. Basho earned her Ph.D. in Child Development from Tufts University, where she focused on cognitive neuroscience (studying reading in the brain at MIT/MGH) and learning differences (executive function, working memory and dyslexia) in children. While obtaining her PhD, Dr. Basho worked with renowned executive function expert, Dr. Lynn Meltzer, conducting neuropsychological assessments, individualized intervention for students, and research in the classroom. She also co-authored a chapter with Dr. Meltzer in the book, "Executive function in the classroom:

Fostering strategic mindsets across the grades and content areas," (2010). As part of the Mind, Brain, Education Summer Institute at Harvard University, Dr. Basho instructed diverse groups of professionals (i.e., teachers, principals, neuropsychologists, and researchers) in how cognitive neuroscience and education can inform one another. Most recently, Dr. Basho was a researcher with Challenge Success at Stanford University where she evaluated school reform programs to reduce stress, improve academic integrity, and increase health/well-being in students.

As Director of Research at Morrissey-Compton Educational Center, Dr. Basho plans to build a research program around executive function (EF) and learning disabilities. She will first focus on the interactions and relationships among AD/HD, learning disabilities and EF. In the educational field, Dr. Basho will continue to build professional development workshops for teachers on how to inte-

grate executive function into the classroom for all students. In addition, she will provide executive function parent education talks to help parents better understand executive function and how it impacts their child. Finally, Dr. Basho will continue to work one-on-one with students who struggle with executive function to help them create and use learning strategies that work for them.

In the near future, Dr. Basho hopes to train other educational therapists, learning specialists, and tutors in how to support students with executive function deficits. She also plans to build specific workshops targeted to students that struggle with various aspects of executive function.

If you would like to:

- Participate in research to help us gain a better understanding of executive function
- Have Dr. Basho come to your school to provide a professional development workshop in executive function
- Come to a parent education workshop in executive function

Please contact Dr. Surina Basho at surina.basho@gmail.com.



Morrissey-Compton Reaches Out to the Community

Morrissey-Compton Educational Center is honored to be directly involved with educational endeavors in our community. Here is a snapshot of some of our work, ranging from advocating on behalf foster youth, to working with hospital staff to evaluate students with developmental delays, to helping teachers develop individualized instruction for their students.

Santa Clara County: Department of Family and Children Services & Juvenile Probation

In accordance with Morrissey-Compton's belief that every child should have access to our expertise and advocacy regardless of their background or financial situation, Morrissey-Compton staff serves as educational consultants to Project YEA. This project ensures that dependents and wards of the Juvenile Court are enrolled in and attending school, and receiving an appropriate educational program. In consulting with social workers, probation officers, caregivers, parents, and educational attorneys from Legal Advocates For Children and Youth (LACY), this mission is accomplished in the following ways. Sharing their years of diagnostic and classroom experience, our educational consultants train and assist social workers, probation officers and stakeholders on children's educational issues. This year we provided a training course about Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Emotional Disturbance, Individualized Education Plans, and 504 Plans to over thirty probation officers, members of the District Attorney's Office, and Juvenile Court judges.

Through our weekly consultations and reviews of school records and student histories we ensure that children with special needs are identified and assessed for disabilities and provided with appropriate services and educational placements. When needed, our staff will attend IEP and 504 meetings to ensure appropriate service delivery. We empower parents,

guardians, and substitute care providers to advocate on behalf of children. We do this not only by securing appropriate services within the school setting, but also by matching dependents with appropriate tutors. By supporting and promoting the educational initiatives of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Court, Department of Family and Children's Services, and Juvenile Probation Department, Morrissey-Compton is able to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of children each year. We are honored to be part of such an important project.

-- Ashley K. Koedel, M.A.

Ashley is an educational consultant with Project YEA! She also conducts assessments, provides educational therapy, and teaches at Challenge Summer School.

Synapse School

Morrissey-Compton Educational Center provides educational and mental health/behavior consultative services to Synapse School, an independent elementary and middle school in Menlo Park. We work directly with educators and students to enhance their understanding of learning differences. The teachers at Synapse are highly invested with creating a personalized educational plan for each student, so there are opportunities for our staff to share insight about specific ways to support bright kids with learning differences. Our staff also helps to organize student data from assessments and class records

so that teachers can better access where kids are functioning as individuals within a larger class group. Synapse is a very special school, and we are excited to make a direct contribution.

--Priya Tjerandsen, M.A.

In addition to offering consultative support to Synapse, Priya conducts assessments and



Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

In addition to their roles at Morrissey-Compton, two of our staff psychologists, Dr. John Brentar and Dr. Heather Taylor, work one morning a week in the Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital (LPCH) at Stanford. Dr. Brentar and Dr. Taylor work as part of an interdisciplinary team consisting of developmental-behavioral pediatricians, psychologists, nurses, and other professionals who provide developmental and behavioral health care for children. In the Developmental Consultation Service, the clinic team conducts evaluations for children with, or at risk for, developmental disorders, delays, or other disabilities. Children seen in the Consultation Service range in age from infants to adolescents. The patient population includes children born prematurely, children with complex medical histories or chronic illnesses, and children with developmental delays, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and/or autism spectrum disorders.

Dr. Taylor also works one morning a week in the Neonatal High Risk Infant Follow-up Program at the hospital. She conducts cognitive and developmental testing on infants and toddlers born at risk for developmental problems due to prematurity or other medical complications during the neonatal period. These children are evaluated in the clinic at regular intervals from birth through around the age of three to monitor their growth and development. At each visit, the children receive individualized developmental assessment and parents are provided with support and information to enhance their child's progress. If necessary, appropriate referrals are

facilitated to community agencies and early intervention programs.

The philosophy of the LPCH Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic is to provide family-centered care in every clinical encounter. The population is highly diverse and it is not uncommon for an evaluation to be conducted with the aid of an interpreter. Many families travel long distances in order to be seen at the clinic due to the lack of such specialized care in their surrounding area. In addition to helping families obtain the appropriate medical and psychological treatment, the clinic also assists families in obtaining social support and advocacy services.

Working in the hospital has its own unique set of challenges. In order to maximize the number of children seen, and because many families travel such long distances to the clinic, evaluations often take place over the course of one morning, as opposed to a more in-depth assessment conducted over several weeks, such as is typically done at Morrissey-Compton. However, the reality is that the majority of the patients seen at in the clinic at LPCH would not be able to access such services elsewhere. It is extremely satisfying to be part of a team that is able to provide a critical service to families of children in need.

--Heather Taylor, Ph.D.

In addition to her work at LPCH, Dr. Taylor conducts assessments and provides therapy at Morrissey-Compton Educational Center.

Groups for Kids!

- Social Skills: Making and Keeping Friends
- Impulse Control: Learning to Slow Down and Think
- Conquering Anxiety and Worries
- Just for Girls: Support Group for Coping with Challenges of Pre-Adolescence

Groups for kids of all ages are forming now! Call or email Sue Garber at sue.garber@morrissey-compton.org or (650) 322-5910 to learn more about Spring and Summer Groups.

Upcoming Events

Spring Fundraiser! Be on the lookout for dates and details about our annual Spring dinner this April. We look forward to seeing you there!

Challenge Summer School, Enrollment for Challenge has begun! Enroll by March 30 to receive a discount on tuition. Challenge will run from June 23- July 24, save your spot today! (See page 8 for more info)



We are no Longer Helicopter Parents!

Jason is a twelve-year-old boy, who at five-years old was diagnosed with insufficient communication between the two hemispheres of the brain along with a hypersensitivity of sound and explosive behavior, if provoked. When he was angry, he would toss a room or hit others without warning whether it was at home or school, be it children or adults. It was as if he was a simmering volcano waiting to erupt. To cope with Jason's behavior a parent coach was hired. This was followed by a year of occupational therapy that focused on addressing his sensitivity to sound as well as different exercises to increase communication between the two hemispheres. Even after being prescribed Zoloft at six years old, he was having major blowouts at school.

Between the ages of eight and eleven, his parents continued to seek ways to improve his impulse control and to improve his social interactions with others. He joined the Boy Scouts and played team sports including baseball and soccer with much improvement. In time, he demonstrated acceptable social behaviors ninety to ninety-five percent of the time. However, the other five to ten percent of the time he was still uncontrollable. Concerned he was getting bigger and stronger, his parents his parents decided it was time to try Interactive Metronome (IM) at Morrissey-Compton Educational Center.

The IM neurocognitive technology targets focusing, motor planning, rhythmicity, attention and concentration, and timing. Based on his IM assessment results and the parents' interview, an eight-week training plan of three IM sessions per week was developed to meet Jason's individual needs. Sessions were designed with Jason's interests in mind and included exercises created by him.

Initially, resistant and non-cooperative, Jason's highly competitive nature made him eager to beat his IM scores and performance levels. After the fifth session, confident that he could beat his previous scores and performance levels, he became determined to put forth more effort. Eventually his scores and performance were rated "superior." His parents observed that after about four or five sessions, they saw a calmness they had never seen before and that he argued less with his teacher and peers.

After achieving his training plan objectives, Jason completed the IM posttest assessment. His posttest results demonstrated a seventy-two percent improvement over the pretest in sustained attention and impulse control. He also showed a one-hundred forty-seven percent improvement in his rhythm, timing and focusing skills. His parents reported an overall decline in explosive behavior and they no longer had to be helicopter parents. Jason successfully self-advocated to be mainstreamed ninety percent of his school day. He is now able to join in the schoolyard games without incident! Jason still struggles but is now able to hear other points of view and modify his reactions. His parents attribute his positive outcomes to the IM training since no other interventions were conducted concurrently for the duration of the training.

--Raymond Jones, Ph.D.

For more information contact Morrissey-Compton Educational Center at (650) 322-5910.

Raymond Jones, Ph.D. is a certified Interactive Metronome provider and Executive Skills Coach.



Challenge Summer School

It's going to be another great summer! Challenge is a very unique summer school. It remains the only private summer school that is not part of a year-round special education school. We continue to have a very high rate of return by the CHILD'S OWN CHOICE! This is incredible in that many of these children find school an unrewarding place.

Challenge is a 5-week summer school program for students in K-6th grades and those entering 7th grade in the fall. It is the perfect option for children who struggle academically in their regular school environment. Our small classes (8-12 students per class) are taught by experienced teachers and all students are grouped by age and instructional needs. Learning happens using a fun theme-based curriculum. Students with learning disabilities receive a review of basic reading, writing, and math as well as strategies to develop organization and thinking. We have expanded our ADHD/Executive Functioning curriculum to encompass all classes, as we believe it will benefit all of our students.

The three goals of Challenge are to:

- Maintain Academic Skills over the Summer
- Foster Self-Esteem and Academic Confidence
- Teach Alternative Strategies for Reading, Writing, Math, and Organization/Executive Functioning

High Quality Follow Through

Every student in Challenge School receives high quality individualized attention and preparation for the following school year. This includes a parent-teacher conference to help guide recommendations for the Fall, parent classes, and teacher reports with individualized recommendations by September.

Check out our website to decide if Challenge would be a good fit for your child!
www.morrissey-compton.org

Important Information:

Tuition discount still by March 30!

ADHD/Executive Functioning Curriculum now offered school wide!

Dates:

Monday, June 23- Thursday July 24, 2014

Price:

Tuition for our summer session is \$2500.00. A \$200.00 deposit is required with your application. This deposit is applied to the total tuition fee.

Donor Appreciation

Thank You 2013 Donors!

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