



SPECIAL TIMES

Community Therapeutic Day School

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GRANDPARENT GROUP IS A GIFT



Bridget Glenshaw, LMHC

Grandparent Group led by Bridget Glenshaw and Michelle Traverse is an integral aspect of the support system embracing the families and children who are a part of the Community Therapeutic Day School. The group began in 1996 and was originated by the school's first social worker, the late Avis Tait. Avis was uniquely attuned to the special relationships between not only the nuclear family system but the extended family, as well. In keeping with the theoretical framework that shapes the way CTDS thinks about children, it was natural to include grandparents -- their needs, challenges and joys -- in the "holding environment" fostered at CTDS. The "holding environment" is a



Michelle Traverse, LICSW

term associated with the work of child psychiatrist and pediatrician, D.W. Winnicott. It can be loosely defined as the environment which

thoughtfully facilitates the relationships, structure and creativity surrounding the child, so that the gaps in their development may be bridged or accommodated, thus allowing for the natural unfolding of the child to occur. Through our work in Grandparent Group, it is clear that the grandparents are an essential and inspiring influence furthering the potential for deeper understanding and healing to occur.

Grandparents are warmly invited to the group through the parents of the students attending our school. Held five times a year during the school day, the format allows time for grandparents and their grandchildren to interact and gives its members a feeling for the pulse and activity inherent to a typical school day. Likewise, grandchildren get to see their grandparents' commitment and support as mirrored by their participation. There is ample time afforded for grandparents to meet with the group where they receive support, education and feedback regarding both their grandchildren's strengths and their challenges. It is a very powerful, helpful opportunity for grandparents to be in a group with peers in like-circumstances. They come to know and appreciate one another and learn from shared insight. The camaraderie is evident and the love for their grandchildren is profound. Grandparent group is a gift that gives and receives with a wisdom and freedom that is deeply respected at CTDS. We share the following quotes from the grandparents:

"We enjoy comforting support of peers."

"Grandparent Group has been very enlightening and interesting, hearing how other grandparents and parents relate to some difficult situations."

"Grandparent Group is a warm, safe environment to listen, learn and share. It can be quite helpful during a stressful period. Honesty will always prevail without judgement."

"It is an honor to be a member of the Grandparent Group at the Community Therapeutic Day School of Lexington."

"The nearly "instant bonding" that occurred during my first Grandparent Group gave me a place that I need to return to again and again. During our gatherings, a glance around the room as soon as one of us shares feelings and thoughts will find the others nodding, smiling, or tearing up because we have all "been there". I feel very safe in the group and realize that the CTDS environment nurtures that same safe place for our "littles."

"As your grandchild grows and develops through the education and care they experience at CTDS, so does the grandparent with the help of the grandparent meetings. To share with other grandparents your experiences and how you approached them could be exactly what another grandparent needs to hear. I know I did."

"Grandparents are generally one step removed from the grandchildren and their parents. Sometimes this leads to misunderstandings due to misinterpretation of certain words or actions. At Grandparent Group these misconceptions are often cleared up and the relationships reestablished on a much firmer footing."

The Texture of Our Days

What makes CTDS an exceptional resource for children and families is the talented and dedicated staff.

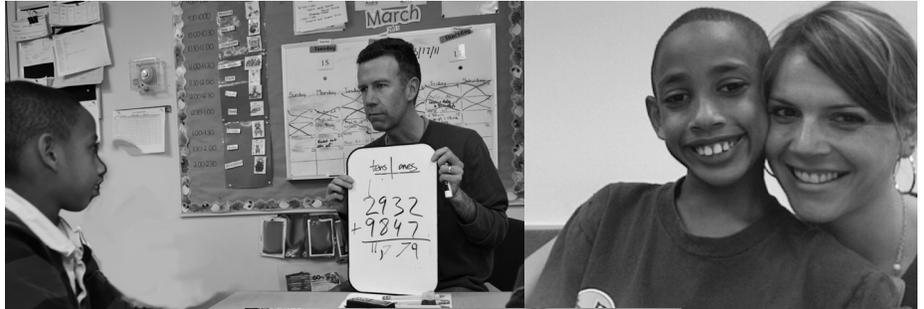
Our staff has a deep commitment to the children and families that attend our program and a dedication to these relationships. Each brings to CTDS their hearts and voices, their professional and personal knowledge of children in the areas of language, cognition, physical, social and psychological development, as well as education, business, and medicine.

Our mission encompasses helping our staff to be the very best they can be and this involves mentoring, guiding, encouraging and supporting everyone as a part of our community.

In this newsletter we introduce our staff to you and I hope you will, through these photos experience the texture of our days at CTDS.

Nancy Fuller, Executive Director

Our Classroom Staff



Our Clinical & Administrative Staff



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