

Alpine Learning Group

Summit

Dedicated to providing state-of-the-art education and intervention services to individuals with autism and their families

20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA Celebrating the Shining Stars of Alpine

Thank you to everyone who attended our 20th Anniversary Gala at the Liberty House Restaurant on April 25th honoring Mark & Debra Gladstone, Co-Founders and Dr. Bridget Taylor, Co-Founder and Executive Director. The event celebrated the successes of Alpine's learners, their families, Board Members, staff and the many friends who have supported Alpine's students and families over the past two decades.

Honoree and Alpine parent Mark Gladstone said the following in his acceptance speech. "We stood before you 20 years ago, trying to mend broken hearts and broken dreams. We asked for help for our children not fully knowing the magnitude of the epidemic that was about to sweep over a generation of young families. This community answered the call for help and the outcome was a nationally acclaimed school that has been a beacon for reliable and trustworthy guidance."

The event raised over \$75,000 towards the educational and support services provided by Alpine. Guests enjoyed dinner, dancing, a Silent and Live Auction, a spectacular fireworks display over the Hudson River and a beautiful performance of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" by Alpine student, Jodi DiPiazza.

"When we started 20 years ago, I had no time to imagine that our students would one day graduate from Alpine, get a job and earn a paycheck," said Dr. Bridget Taylor. "It was hard to imagine that some of our students would attend school with their typically developing peers; that we would reach dozens more students through our Outreach

Program; or that we would be sending our clinicians nationally and internationally to help launch and improve other programs."

Doug Duchak, president of Englewood Hospital & Medical Center, was the Master of Ceremonies for the evening and John Donvan of ABC News spoke to attendees about the importance of raising awareness of autism and the challenges that families face.

A special award was presented to the Melik-Baschkopf Foundation in recognition of two generous grants to Alpine Learning Group that will provide up to \$1,000,000 in funding for adults with autism.

A recurring theme throughout the evening was the increasing need for adult services. "These first 20 years—this was the easy part," Mark Gladstone commented. "Our next challenge is already underway as another huge generation of needy young adults graduate from many secondary programs. As before, there was nothing and once again, Alpine Learning Group is paving the way."



Staff

Dr. Bridget A. Taylor
Executive Director

Kate Cerino Britton MEd., MA
Principal/Assistant Director

Angela Pagliaro MA, BCBA
Director of Outreach Services

Erin Richard, MA, BCBA
Director of Adult & Transition Services

Barbara Hoffmann, MA, BCBA
Teacher

Jaime Schilling, MS
Teacher

Karissa Masuicca MEd, BCBA
Teacher

Wendy Worden
Director of Development

Terri Pisano
Business Manager

Linda Moran
Executive Assistant

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Message from the Director



Dear Friends:

Alpine Learning Group is twenty years old? It seems only yesterday that I trudged down the steps to the basement of the Alpine community house, accompanied by Linda Meyer and a handful of teachers. Armed with puzzles, little chairs, and homemade dividers, we battled dust, cobwebs, and a distinct lack of ventilation. But it didn't matter. The children's laughter, the staffs' enthusiasm, and all the shared learning inspired us day after day.

Back then, in that basement, I never imagined that, twenty years later, I'd see three students from that very first class off to work each day, or that Alpine's first graduate would graduate from college with an associates degree. But those achievements are no surprise when I look around and reflect on Alpine's rich foundation of hard work, determination, and community.

Alpine is built on the shared conviction that no achievement, and no effort, is ever small. Instead, each triumph is measured by the inspiration and dedication that allowed it to become a reality. One child's very first, hard-won word is as much cause for celebration as another's college acceptance, and one student's first day at a new volunteer job is as thrilling as another family's first sit-down dinner together. It also means that we all share in what is no small satisfaction: the knowledge that each day we have made not just one life, but many, that much better.

Of course, every milestone reached at Alpine is the result of a tremendous collaboration in

which every contribution is indispensable. Our mission brings together dedicated parents and family members, skilled and diligent teachers, committed board members, and a tireless support staff. Together, we have created an environment where each and every member of the Alpine community—whether student, parent, or staff—is supported by a “dream team” of teachers, advisors, facilitators, cheerleaders, and eternal fans.

Fortunately, we can be sure that, however much we have achieved in twenty years, students will continue to push us toward new and higher goals. Alpine's students constantly surprise us, inspire us, and challenge us to work harder to be better and to never give up. Indeed, the very richness of their lives demands nothing less than the best from the rest of us. It has been a pleasure and privilege to be a part of Alpine's rich and productive history, but it is an even greater privilege to look forward—with all of you—to twenty more years of collaboration, challenge, and accomplishment.

And, really, it feels wonderful to be twenty years old!

Warmly,

Bridget

Alpine Learning Group Reaches Out to Hispanic Community: Parent Training Now Available in Spanish

Three years ago, with help from a generous donation from Hoop-A-Paluzza, Alpine initiated its Early Detection Parent Training and Education Program to assist families of newly-diagnosed toddlers. However, few resources exist for families in the Spanish-speaking community to help them find the information and assistance they need regarding autism and the services available to them.

In order to meet this need, Alpine staff members Andrea Gonzalez, Natalia Osorio, and Jessica Prieto have translated all of Alpine Learning Group's Parent Training materials (printed and video) into Spanish. Alpine provides a Spanish-speaking facilitator for the day-long didactic training session as well as the in-home training sessions. Most of the families that currently participate have had children diagnosed at Hackensack Medical Center's Institute for Child Development, but the training is open to all Hispanic families.

“This training is so important because it offers Spanish-speaking families the opportunity to learn the facts about autism and the importance of early intervention,” said Angela Pagliaro, Director of Outreach Services. “The training focuses on the benefits of Applied Behavior Analysis and how parents can be proactive in their child's education and treatment.”

Very Special Thanks To...

...**The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation** for their generous grant of \$500,000 towards the establishment of our Adult Learning Center.

...**The Toys "R" Us Children's Fund** for their \$20,000 grant for our Parent Training & Education Program.

...**TD Bank's Affinity Program** for their generous donation of \$10,576.

...**The Franklin Lakes Woman's Club** for their generous donation of \$4,000 towards our Adult Matching Grant.

...**Douglas Padla and Booth Movers** for their generous donation of \$1,500 worth of office supplies.

The Quest Autism Foundation

has pledged \$750,000 towards Alpine's Adult Program. "We are grateful for the generosity and support of the Quest Autism Foundation towards Alpine's Adult Center," said Dr. Bridget Taylor shown here with Jim Hoppe of the Quest Autism Foundation. "We are united by the common purpose—ensuring that adults with autism have the education and support they need to continue to thrive."

In honor of Gracie Conneely-Nolan's

fourth birthday party this March, she and her mom, Shelby, made a donation to Alpine Learning Group. Shelby Conneely serves on the Human Rights Committee for Alpine and Gracie and her sister Felicia will be "peer models" this summer, helping learners with autism increase their social skills.



The Melik-Baschkopf Foundation has awarded Alpine Learning Group a \$500,000 Fixed Grant and a \$500,000 Matching Grant for the Adult Education Program which will provide continuing education and career training for adults with autism. The Foundation will match donations dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$500,000 for an incredible \$1,000,000 towards Alpine's new Adult Program. These grants were made possible through the generosity of The Melik-Baschkopf Foundation's Trustees, Andrea Reiff, Ed Dietrich and Milton Kahn, who is a founding Board Member and longtime friend of Alpine.

To date, we have raised over \$130,000 towards our goal, but we need your help to reach our goal of raising \$500,000. To make a donation toward this grant, please visit www.alpinelearninggroup.org and click on the Contribute Now tab or send a check to Alpine Learning Group referencing "Adult Matching Grant". Together, we can all make a difference in the lives of adults with autism.

Raising Autism Awareness Through Music: Alpine Learning Group Partners with Sing SOS/Songs of the Spectrum

On Sunday, February 22nd, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar hosted an afternoon of food and music to benefit Alpine Learning Group and SingSOS/Songs of the Spectrum. Over 55 guests attended the event which raised more than \$2,200 for both organizations.

SingSOS is an autism awareness project that enlists the power of music to convey the range of experiences—from heartbreak to triumph—involved with autism. Top-name musicians including Jackson Browne, Dar Williams and Marshall Crenshaw have recorded songs for the upcoming CD which is scheduled to launch in Fall 2009. Alpine Learning Group and other area schools will receive a portion of the proceeds.

"It is so important that we continue to raise awareness of autism and the impact that it has on the lives of the children and families affected by this disorder," said Wendy Worden, Director of Development. "The performance highlighted the

intense emotions that families experience as they learn to live with autism and you could really feel the connection between the musicians and many of the Alpine families and supporters."

Attendees enjoyed flavorful appetizers, delicious wines selected especially for the occasion and a live performance of the songs by their composers—John O'Neil, Jon Fried and Deena Shoshkes.

On April 2nd, Sing SOS/Songs of the Spectrum performed their songs during an hour long concert at the United Nations as part of World Autism Awareness Day. For more information and to listen to the songs visit: www.myspace.com/songsofthespectrum.



James and John O'Neil of Sing SOS/Songs of the Spectrum with Dr. Bridget Taylor.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Bergen Community College and Alpine Students

Creating Healthy Smiles— One Step at a Time

Building and maintaining strong ties to the community is a two-way street, and nowhere is that more evident than at the Alpine Learning Group. One of those streets leads to Bergen Community College.

Leaders at Alpine reached out to the college to discuss a unique endeavor that would benefit not only Alpine's learners, but also the students enrolled in the college's dental hygienist's program. In the fall of 2008, these students were given the opportunity to demonstrate routine dental hygiene procedures to Alpine's learners, helping to desensitize the children to the sights, sounds, textures and instruments involved with visits to the dentist.

"Dental visits for children with autism are typically very challenging," said Dr. Bridget Taylor. "Through consistent encounters with the college's dental hygiene program, our students learned to tolerate routine dental hygiene exams and became more comfortable with the dental check-up experience."

The program allowed Bergen's dental hygiene students to benefit from firsthand experience in working with and relating to individuals with autism.

The college's President, Dr. G. Jeremiah Ryan, says that such initiatives are important. "Bergen Community College is committed to its mission to serve as an enduring presence within the community," he said. "This type of service-learning initiative allows our students to expand their skill sets. The College is honored to have developed such an important partnership with the Alpine Learning Group."



Humza and his dental hygienist both get a chance to try out their newly acquired skills.

Community Based Internship Program

Real Life Experience Makes a Difference

Each day, Alpine students ages 16-21 participate in a range of community based learning experiences within the Internship Program. The goal of this program is to expose young adults to a wide range of work settings and volunteer opportunities in order to assess their potential job strength and interests. Students have the opportunity to practice vocational skills within a real working environment which is a critical step towards future employment. In addition, the program fosters a connection with the community by raising awareness of learners' abilities to perform job duties.



Matt helps out at the New Milford Public Library by placing books back on the shelves.

**This program would not be possible
without the generosity and support
of our community partners.**

*Bergen Community College
Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Care One at The Cupola
Christian Health Care Center
Daughters of Miriam
Davis Advanced Health System
Dr. John F. Pojedinec
Englewood Hospital & Medical Center
EPIC School
GR Packaging
Hackensack Golf Club
Marshalls
New Hair Concepts
New Milford Public Library
Paramus Shade Tree & Park Commission
Quest Autism Foundation
Ridgewood YMCA
Sunrise Assisted Living
Staples
The UPS Store
Valley Home Care
The Valley Hospital*

Making A Difference: Looking Back at 20 Years of Service

When Mark and Debby Gladstone's 23 year-old son, Andrew, was diagnosed with autism in 1987, they immediately began looking for help. Armed with education and information about quality, effective services, they quickly set up an intensive home program for Andrew and started looking for an appropriate school program.

At that time, however, there were only a few behaviorally based schools for children with autism in New Jersey – all of them hours away and with long waiting lists. After months of research and frustration, the Gladstones made a life-altering decision: they teamed up with three other families and autism specialists, Bridget Taylor, Linda Meyer and Fred Bunker to start a new school.

In the summer of 1989, Alpine Learning Group opened its doors to Andrew and three other students in a local community center. Like the autism spectrum itself, these first students had a range of skills and abilities, so Alpine staff developed a broad scope of services in order to meet the needs of each student.

As the number of learners grew and more space was needed, the school moved to the Bergenfield Dumont Jewish Center. Over the next few years, Alpine launched its Peer Modeling Program by recruiting siblings and friends of staff and training these 'peer teachers' to help pre-school children with autism learn vital social and language skills. At that time, few other schools were using such strategies.

With these services in place, Alpine found that some students could transition back into local public schools. Alpine initiated its Transition and Inclusion Program, providing a vital link between the intensive support offered at Alpine and the less structured classrooms found in general education.

After several years in Bergenfield, Alpine moved to its next home in the River Dell Middle School. With twenty-four students on its roster and a long waiting list, school leaders knew there was more they wanted to do to help children and their families. Alpine formalized its Outreach Program to provide home-based services to families of newly-diagnosed infants and toddlers not yet enrolled in school. The program has served hundreds of families through expert training, in-home supervision and curriculum development.

Based on the same philosophy and principles that drive the school, Alpine's Adult Program, launched in 2004, offers participants individually designed employment supports and community experiences.



July
1989

Alpine Learning Group
Opens Its Doors



September
1991

Alpine Moves to the
Bergenfield Dumont
Jewish Center

July
1992



Transition & Inclusion
Program Established



September
1994

Alpine Moves to
River Dell Middle School



September
1995

Alpine Establishes
Outreach Program

September
1998



Alpine Opens Its Doors
at the Newly Constructed
School In Paramus

By summer 1998, Alpine Learning Group was able to complete construction on the school's permanent home in Paramus and expand the Outreach Program to include the Early Detection and Treatment Program. Working with local hospitals and diagnostic centers, Alpine offers families current, science-based information about treatment and helps them advocate for appropriate services.

"Alpine established this program because too many parents were wasting weeks, months and even years in treatments without a basis in science," said Angela Pagliaro, who directs the program. "Parents have to make decisions about treatment quickly and get started right away. They need information to do that."

One of the families to benefit from the program was the King family—first, for their son Liam, and later for their daughter, Riley. "I was in 'panic mode,' recalled Colleen King. "Time was slipping by and I knew Liam needed help right away," she said. Within weeks, he went from receiving five hours of early intervention, to twenty hours a week of clinically supervised treatment at home. Today, both children are served by Alpine—Liam in the school program and Riley in the Outreach Program.

In recent years, the Social Skills Program has become another important part of the Outreach Program by providing the opportunity for children to learn and practice appropriate ways to learn and practice necessary social skills.

Through development of education, treatment and support services, Alpine has become a leader in the field of autism—locally, nationally and around the world.

School programs as far away as Canada, France, and Italy have turned to Alpine for consultation. Closer to home, Alpine's staff have been instrumental in developing new schools, including New York City's first and only charter school for children with autism. In addition, Alpine's educational research has appeared in numerous professional journals and Alpine staff members regularly present at national conferences.

"New Jersey is fortunate to have such a wonderful resource that has helped thousands of families and advanced the field in teaching these students," said Gerard Thiers, Executive Director of ASAH, New Jersey's association of private special education schools. "Alpine is a national leader, indeed—an international leader—in serving children with autism spectrum disorders."

As Alpine's oldest students approached adolescence, school leaders recognized the need to develop a new type of learning experience. In 2000, the school piloted its Community Based Internship Program, which provides teens with vocational

training at worksites and volunteer opportunities in the community. With on-site training and support from staff, students develop work skills and are assessed to determine their strengths and interests for potential jobs when they graduate.

Linda Walder Fiddle, Esq., Executive Director of The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation, stated that Alpine has deservedly earned the reputation as one of the nation's leading educational programs for children and young adults with autism. "The success of the program is due to many factors, including the outstanding leadership of Dr. Bridget Taylor, a pioneer in developing effective and science-based educational models, coupled with a highly-trained and talented professional and support staff," said Walder Fiddle.

While scores of children have come through Alpine's doors in the last twenty years, some have remained, and it is these adult learners who represent Alpine's next challenge. Based on the same philosophy and principles that drive the school, Alpine's Adult Program, launched in 2004, offers participants individually designed employment supports and community experiences. Just as he was a pioneer in Alpine's school program 20 years ago, Andrew Gladstone is now one of the first participants in the Adult Program.

What began as Mark and Debby Gladstone's dream for their son 20 years ago has become hope for so many children.

"When Andrew was younger, there were too few quality school programs available for children with autism," said Andrew's father, Mark.

"And now that Andrew is a young man, there are too few services for adults with autism. It gives Debby and I—and so many other parents of adults with autism—great comfort to know that Alpine is there for our kids. We have accomplished so much in the last twenty years, but there is still so much work ahead of us."



September 1999

Community Based Internship Program Established For Young Adults



July 2004

Adult Program Established

September 2005

Social Skills Program Established



July 2006

Early Detection & Treatment/Parent Training Program Established



Alpine Celebrates 20 Years!

The Future

Alpine Continues To Meet The Challenges...

ALPINE PHOTO GALLERY



Johnny Rojas and Shirley Balboa present a check to Dr. Bridget Taylor from Century 21 Real Estate for \$7,000.



Robert Gans, Caren Gans and Oren Richland were among the 100 supporters who attended Alpine's "Evening of Appreciation".



The DiPiazza Family and Assemblywoman Joan Voss attended the Sing SOS/Alpine fundraiser at Fleming's in Edgewater.



Alpine Board Treasurer, Matt Shmanske, Milton Kahn, Scott Lippert, Melissa Kahn, Christopher Rogers and Jan Kahn.



Gwen Purcell, Kate Britton and Bridget Taylor accepting a \$4,000 donation from members of The Franklin Lakes Woman's Club.



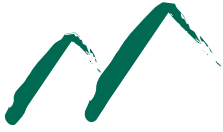
Natalia Osorio, Life Coach, and Erin Richard, Director of Adult & Transition Services, congratulate Andrew on his first paycheck. Way to go Andrew!



Laura Sulborsky of TD Bank presents a check for \$10,576 to Wendy Worden, Director of Development, from TD Bank's Affinity Program.



Greg, Jonathan and Matt were key shooters for TEAM ALPINE at Hoop-A-Paluzza which raised over \$12,000 for Alpine Learning Group!



ALPINE LEARNING GROUP

Meeting the Challenge

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*A Nonprofit Education and Treatment Program
Serving Individuals with Autism*

www.alpinelearninggroup.org

thanks to our supporters

Alpine Learning Group Celebrates 20 Years

Many thanks to our friends, families
and supporters for making our 20th
Anniversary Gala a wonderful success!

Golf & Tennis Outing

Thank you to the many golfers, tennis
players and friends who attended this
year's event at Montammy Golf Club in
Alpine. We are truly grateful for the
continued support and friendship of this
year's honoree, Rose Marie Manger, Esq.

announcements

**Dr. Taylor will be presenting at the Florida
Tech Autism Conference on November 6th**

**ALPINE STAFF WILL BE PRESENTING AT THE
AUTISM NJ CONFERENCE IN ATLANTIC CITY**

KATE BRITTON AND JAIME SCHILLING –
*“Teaching Safety Skills: Resources for
Families and Professionals”*
Saturday, October 10th

ERIN RICHARD AND KARISSA MASUICCA –
*“Preparing Adolescents and Adults for Working
in the Community”*
Saturday, October 10th

**Check out Alpine's upcoming publication
in the journal: *Behavior Analysis in Practice*
Teaching Teenagers with Autism to Answer
Cell Phones and Seek Assistance When Lost.**