



September 2015

## Events

Adaptive Fishing (Building Brighter Dreams): Sept 12<sup>th</sup> 9-11 AM Truro (SW of Winterset)

World Series: Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> 6-7:30 PM Ankeny Miracle League Field

Great Pumpkin Party: Oct 20<sup>th</sup> at Valley Church West Des Moines

Dance Without Limits Dance Recital: Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 PM, Urbandale HS Performing Arts Center

## Dear Blank:

*"Why isn't there a bigger waiting room in the downtown clinic?"*

We agree the Des Moines Peds Therapy Clinic waiting room is small. We invite parents to wait in the large Blank waiting area by the Blank Entrance as long as you let the front desk staff know where you will be. As we look at "new space" for our expanding clinic, a larger waiting room will be designed. If families have ideas for anything they would like in a waiting room, please let us know so we can consider them in our expansion plans.

Submit a question to:  
[rose.giorgio-nelson@unitypoint.org](mailto:rose.giorgio-nelson@unitypoint.org)



## Benjamin Smiles Donation to Blank!

Benjamin Smiles Ride is a magical event to honor the light, love, and life of one special little boy. Benjamin was diagnosed at age five with cancer in 1998 and spent the majority of next year in a Children's hospital in Utah. Ben loved motorcycles, sewing, and his family. Ben spent many hours riding his toy Harley with matching motorcycle jacket, while his mother sewed pillows and quilts to bring comfort to Ben and other children during his hospital admissions. During his hospital stay, Benjamin participated in a toy run from a motorcycle group in Utah that brought bikers along with toys in order to bring joy to each child. This was such a special event for Ben because of his love for motorcycles.

After Ben passed away in 1999, his family has helped to organize thirteen years of Benjamin Smiles Toy Run to bring Bikers and joy to sick children. The ride this year started from C & C Cycle in Chariton Iowa to Blank Children's Hospital and brought with it over a hundred bikers and a trailer full of toys and homemade pillows for each child at Blank Children's Hospital.

Benjamin Smiles Toy Run has, over the last two years, added toys and supplies for our Blank Pediatric Therapy Department to their generous donations. These toys allow each child to have a fun and interactive experience during therapy which brings sparkling smiles that continue to bring Ben's joy and love to thousands of children each year.

Thank You Benjamin Smiles Toy Run, for allowing Blank Pediatric Therapy to share a small part of Benjamin's Story!



**Organizations or individuals interested in making a donation can view our Amazon Baby Registry at:**

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/baby-reg?ie=UTF8&lid=2QABGMGF9QN9Z&ref\\_=](https://www.amazon.com/gp/baby-reg?ie=UTF8&lid=2QABGMGF9QN9Z&ref_=)



Katie is a speech language pathologist who graduated from Truman State University. She works in our downtown clinic 5 days a week. Katie is currently working on specializing in feeding therapy by completing a mentorship with the existing feeding team members. She lives with her husband, 4 month old son Miles, and fur baby Kingsley. In her free time, Katie likes to crochet.



Robin is a speech language pathologist who graduated from the University of Northern Iowa. She works in our downtown office. Robin enjoys working with all of her clients and especially enjoys working with children with autism and apraxia. She lives with her husband, Andrew, her daughter Ruby, who is 2 ½ and dog, Sunny. Robin and her husband are expecting a baby boy in October. She enjoys spending time with her family, exercising, reading, and knitting.



Robyn is an occupational therapist who graduated from St. Ambrose University. She works full time in our Ankeny office. Robyn has worked with many children with feeding issues as well as children with Down syndrome. She loves to spend time with her family and their dog, Braylee. In her free time, Robyn also enjoys attending and watching NASCAR races, scrapbooking, and crafting.

Jason is a physical therapist who graduated from Des Moines University. He works in both our downtown and Ankeny offices on a part time basis. Jason is also an assistant professor at Des Moines University in their Doctor of Physical Therapy program. He is married and has 1 daughter and 2 sons.

Michelle is an occupational therapist who graduated from University of South Dakota. She works in our West Des Moines office three days a week and our downtown office one day a week. Michelle enjoys helping run our handwriting camps as well as learning more about feeding therapy. Michelle lives with her husband and two sons. She spends a lot of her free time attending her sons' baseball games and other sporting events.

Jody is a physical therapist who graduated from St. Louis University and has been practicing for 15 years. She is originally from southern Illinois and has lived in Iowa for the past 4 years. Jody works in our West Des Moines office. She is married with 2 boys, ages 9 and 6. Her family also has 1 dog and 2 fish. Jody's free time is spent watching her sons' sporting events, outdoor activities, and shopping.



## What is Speech Therapy?

During the next few newsletters, we will be taking a look at each type of therapy to describe what each works on and aims to achieve. Up first: speech-language therapy! The primary areas that Speech-Language Pathologists at Blank evaluate and treat include disorders or delays in speech articulation and language expression & comprehension:

Speech	Expressive Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correct production of sounds that are appropriate for the child's age</li><li>• Patterns of errors in sound production (e.g., always using the "T" sound instead of the "K" sound)</li><li>• Coordination of speech sounds together to form words and phrases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of words, signs, pictures, or speech-generating devices to communicate wants and needs</li><li>• Use of age-appropriate grammar and syntax (sentence structure)</li><li>• Expressive vocabulary growth</li><li>• Initiating communication with adults and children</li></ul>
Receptive Language	More
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary comprehension</li><li>• Understanding and following directions</li><li>• Understanding age-appropriate concepts (for example: on/off, under/over, big/little, etc.)</li><li>• Comprehension of complex language (for example, different types of sentences, questions, multi-step directions)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional areas may include fluency (stuttering), difficulties due to brain injury, and voice concerns.</li></ul>

Depending on your child's age and needs, speech therapy may include practicing words/sounds or listening to and discussing stories, etc. Many goals will be embedded into fun activities, such as playing with toys and games.

The goal of speech-language therapy is for children to be able to express their wants and needs with family, friends, and other people in their community, so it will be important to practice skills with your child outside of therapy. Your therapist will provide you with suggestions for ways to incorporate your child's goals into everyday activities and may give you specific "homework" assignments to work on at home as well. Since you are with your children day in and day out, you know them better than anyone else and have the greatest ability to help them learn and grow during daily activities. We are here to help you and your child meet all of his or her communication goals!

## Fall Fun!

- **Outdoor Scavenger Hunts-** talk to your child about what you find. There are great printables online.
- *Leaf Play-* Have kids help rake, jump in leaf pile, & find biggest leaf ...talk about what you find, lots of opportunity of sensory input/gross motor skills
- Create an obstacle course—jump over pool noodles, climb over leaf piles, climb over logs or under lawn chairs! It's a great way to incorporate lots of gross motor skills
- *Go on a hike at a park or around the neighborhood*
- Play classic outdoor games—Red Light/Green Light, Simon Says, Kickball, Follow The Leader
- *Head to your nearest Apple Orchard or Pumpkin Patch—check out the sights, sounds, and new sensations. The Corn Pools are always great for sensory input, climbing skills and strengthening.*
- **Color Walks—**Pick one color, get outside and start searching

## What would you like see in Connections?

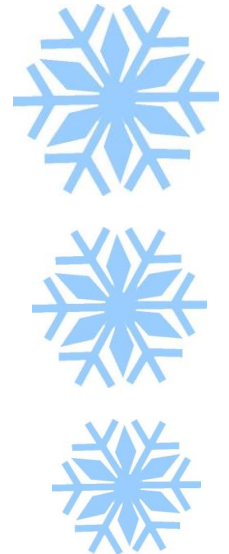
If there is a topic that you would like to see in a future issue of Connections, let us know! All suggestions are welcome.

Please email [rose.giorgio-nelson@unitypoint.org](mailto:rose.giorgio-nelson@unitypoint.org)

## Winter Weather Policy

Last season our Winter Weather Policy was revised based on family feedback. Please review the following key points and take a reminder copy located at the front desk.

- ✚ Ankeny, Des Moines, and West Des Moines clinics will remain **OPEN** regardless of weather related school closings, late starts, or early outs.
  - Including closings for snow and cold
- ✚ If you are unable to make your scheduled appointment please call prior to the appointment time: Ankeny (515) 963-7924, Des Moines (515) 241-8550, West Des Moines (515) 225-6212
- ✚ In the rare event of the clinics closing it will be posted on TV news channels and/or Blank Children's Hospital Facebook page. Additionally, the Des Moines clinic phone will be updated. (515) 241-8550
- ✚ Please ensure your personal phone numbers are up to date with our front desk staff so your therapist may reach you if they are unable to come in.



Thank you and we hope you have a fun, warm, and safe winter season!

Kids are invited to wear a costume to their appointment the week of October 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>!



## Coming Soon!

“What was it that my therapist recommended at the last session? What’s that policy say again? I had something to tell you, but now I can’t remember!”

If that sounds familiar, you’re not alone! Daily life can be hectic making it a challenge to keep important information together. We’d like to help! In the upcoming months you will be receiving a Blank Pediatric Therapy folder complete with key policies, home programming, and caregiver-therapist communication pages. Another way Blank works to connect with you.

**Blank Pediatric Therapy**  
Des Moines: 515-241-8550  
Ankeny: 515-963-7924  
West Des Moines: 515-225-6212