



The Insider

Life Span Institute at Parsons

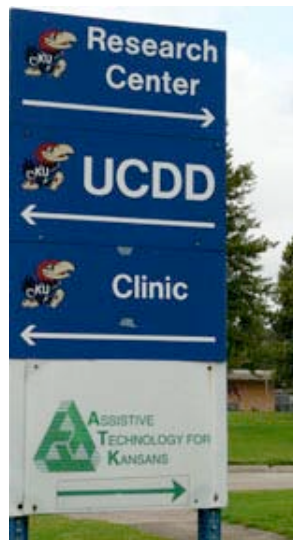
September 2010

Patty Black Moore, Editor

AT a Glance

The Life Span Institute at Parsons

Mission: Committed to optimizing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families through research, training, technical assistance and public service.



WHO The LSI at Parsons brings together more than 50 staff, including investigators, research and administrative staff, graduate and postdoctoral students.

WHAT One of 13 centers that make up the University of Kansas Life Span Institute, the LSI at Parsons currently has 30 active programs and projects that constitute basic and translational research, training, direct services, consultation and technical assistance. Last year, 18,000 Kansans benefited from Parsons LSI direct services, training and technical assistance.

WHEN Work originating at the LSI at Parsons continues a long history of significantly enhancing the quality of life enjoyed by individuals with disabilities enabling them to more effectively communicate their needs, preferences, interests and feelings to the important people in their lives.

WHERE Located in southeast Kansas, the Kansas University Center on Developmental

Disabilities (KUCDD) at Parsons and the Parsons Research Center comprise the LSI at Parsons. Other research and training centers are on the University’s main campus in Lawrence, at the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, the Children’s Campus of Kansas City and the University of Kansas Edwards Campus.

For more information about the Life Span Institute at Parsons, visit our website, <http://parsons.lsi.ku.edu/>.

For a detailed look at the work of the University of Kansas Life Span Institute, see the Life Span Institute Annual Report 2009-2010 at



<http://www2.ku.edu/~lsi/aboutus/annualreports.shtml>.

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“Just the STATS”

Through five regional access sites across the state, Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) provided direct service to 4,940 individuals this past year ranging in age from birth to 110 years of age. ATK serves Kansans of all ages with any type of disability or health condition.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT



Closing the Loop: Exploring Best Practices in Healthy Athletes Referral Follow-Up

Richard Saunders,
Principal Investigator
Muriel Saunders,
Co-Principal Investigator
Zora Pace
Graduate Research Assistant



The project is funded by Special Olympics, Inc. through January 11, 2011.

Project Summary:

Previous research explored the impact on Special Olympics athletes of their participation in Healthy Athletes screenings. With this project, the researchers will expand on their Initial Research Project to explore methods of ensuring athletes follow-up on their health screening results. The research will identify existing referral follow-up practices, test their effectiveness and package the results for Special Olympics Healthy Athletes programs.

Project Goals:

- 1) Identify a set of practices currently conducted by Special Olympics Programs that have the potential to enhance adherence by athletes and families to follow-up care recommendations received at Healthy Athletes. This set of practices should reflect diversity in geography, socio-cultural environments, types of national healthcare delivery systems, types of follow-up practices, and types of Healthy Athletes disciplines.
- 2) Conduct a formal assessment of this subset of follow-up practices to determine the likelihood of parents/guardians seeing the screening results, the likelihood of parents/guardians understanding the results, and the likelihood of athletes following-up on the referrals.
- 3) Package best practices for dissemination to Special Olympics Programs.
- 4) Identify barriers that remain to athletes getting follow-up care despite these best practices.

PUBLICATIONS

- Anderson, C. M., Doughty, S. S., Doughty, A. H., Williams, D. C., & Saunders, K. J. (2010, Summer). Evaluation of stimulus control over a communication response as an intervention for stereotypical responding. *Journal Of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 43(2), 333–339.
- Bashinski, S., Durando, J., & Stremel Thomas, K. (2010). Family survey results: Children with deaf-blindness, who have cochlear implants. *AER Journal: Research and Practice in Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 3(3), p.9-12.
- Stewart, K., Hayashi, Y., & Saunders, K. (2010). Enhancing vowel discrimination using constructed spelling. *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, 26, 57-64.
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WELCOME BACK!



CHELIE NELSON

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Specialist
Ph.D., Special Education
University of Kansas

David
Lindeman,
Kansas Inservice
Training System
(KITS) project

director, is pleased to announce the addition of Chelie Nelson to the technical assistance staff. Dr. Nelson may be a familiar face to many of her colleagues across the state; she was a member of the KITS team from 2000 through 2005.

Over her career, Chelie has worked in the field of early childhood as a school-based speech-language pathologist, an early childhood special education teacher, an early childhood technical assistance specialist, an assistant professor, and most recently as assistant director of Special Education for the Harvey County Special Education Cooperative. Chelie received her Bachelor and Master's degrees in Communicative Sciences and Disorders from Wichita State University. She was endorsed as an early childhood special education teacher through Emporia State University and received her Ph.D. in Special Education and her

administrative endorsement from the University of Kansas.

Chelie has an extensive background in childhood language and emergent literacy development. Her dissertation research focused on the literacy experiences of young children with disabilities in preschool settings. Other areas of interests and expertise include collaborative early childhood programs, inclusive service delivery models, adapting early childhood curriculum, embedding intervention, and coaching/consultation. As a technical assistance specialist, Chelie will be working with agencies and individuals serving preschool age children with disabilities and their families.

Dr. Lindeman said, “We welcome and are fortunate to have Chelie back as a part of the KITS Team. She brings to us a sound background in early childhood education and a wealth of information with her recent experiences as an administrator of early childhood programs.”

Based in Park City, Chelie enjoys travel, learning about the history of the places she visits

and shopping. She grew up in California and while she misses the mild weather, she enjoys the seasons that Kansas offers. Summer is her favorite season because of the sunshine and the opportunity to use her jet skis at the lake. This fall she is looking forward to watching both of

her nephews, Robi and Tomi, play soccer for the Mulvane High School Wildcats.

Chelie looks forward to her new role on the KITS team and the opportunity to again work with the early childhood programs and professionals in Kansas.

STAFF NEWS



ALLEN CRIM has been the 24/7 face of Coordinated Resource and Support Services (CRSS) since 1993, providing crisis intervention and support for individuals with the dual diagnoses of mental illness and developmental

disability. Starting on September 1, 2010, Alan assumes the position of Program Coordinator with Mosaic, Inc. in Pittsburg, Kansas. Mosaic is a national, faith-based organization providing services to people with intellectual disabilities. In the picture, Allen Crim receives a Persky print for his years of service.

MARGY HORNBACK announces her retirement. The KITS Project wishes Dr. Hornback a **HAPPY RETIREMENT!** KITS, and Kansas as a whole, will miss her vast contributions to the field of early childhood special education!

Margy has worked in a wide variety of roles throughout her career, including being a service provider, program administrator, teacher trainer/college professor, state agency early childhood coordinator, and training and technical assistance provider. In each of these roles she has been a leader in our State and will be missed.

Her immediate plans include travel with her husband, Bob, and going to as many car races as they can. Hopefully, some time in the future we will be able to draw upon Margy's knowledge and experience to continue to improve services for children and families.

SARA MAJOR says: I'm wrapping up my work with the SEK Family Care Treatment Project. I've accepted the position of lead behavior analyst with the Arc of the Ozarks in Springfield, Missouri.

While I'm excited about the new opportunity and advancement, it's hard to leave KU LSI and SE Kansas! I've thoroughly enjoyed my time here, and was not actively looking for a new job (Katie can blame The Arc for emailing everyone on the BCBA registry about the opening and salary). I've worked at KU LSI since the beginning of 2006 and I couldn't have asked for a better position right out of graduate school. I was fortunate to use my employment as my supervised hours to obtain my Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification, working under Katie.

I have learned so much in my current position, and have been fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and flexible supervisor who challenged me and encouraged me to learn more. I will miss my co-workers – from Peggy and Katie's animal pictures and Peggy's motherly weather updates to all of our nicknames and Roger's willingness to give me a ride to work when my car broke down (and to give me boxes from his recent move!). I've been lucky to have such great people to work

with, who not only know how to provide amazing research-based services, but who always keep a sense of humor doing it! Thanks

to everyone here at KU for making me always feel welcome and comfortable.

PROJECT NEWS

RICHARD R. SAUNDERS, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Life Span Institute at Parsons, University of Kansas, was one of the featured presenters on the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) quarterly topical webinar. The September 14 topic was Obesity, Disability and Health, examining the intersection of obesity, health, and people with disabilities.

The Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Administration on

Developmental Disabilities, and the University of Kansas collaborated on a pilot project with the goal to package guidance on losing weight in a manner that would be accepted and followed by adults with developmental disabilities with better outcomes than had been reported in the literature. By offering a diet that was very easy to prepare, easy to remember, not expensive, and had a variety of health options, the 79 participants lost weight. Most have kept the weight off or continued to lose!

SAVE THE DATE!



Beyond the Diagnosis: Autism Across the Life Span, October 14-15, 2010 at Johnson County Community College and at University of Kansas Edwards Campus. Conference topic strands include Early Childhood, Behavioral Supports, Social Skills, Community Living and Employment.

The Thursday Noon Keynote speaker is Dr. Steve Warren, University of Kansas; his topic is “Automated vocal analysis of naturalistic recordings from children with autism, language delay, and typical development.” Dr. Warren is internationally recognized for his contribution to understanding language development in children.

On Friday at 9:00 AM, Roy Richard Grinker, author of the book “Unstrange Minds: Remapping the World of Autism” is the featured speaker. Mr. Grinker is the world’s leading authority presenting on autism for lay audiences, combining a mastery of the latest medical knowledge and a deep personal understanding of social and cultural context in accessible, non-technical language.

The public is invited.

For information on the conference: http://kcart.ku.edu/beyond_diagnosis_2010/index.shtml. To register: <http://ksautismconference.org>

The conference is hosted jointly by the University of Kansas Center For Autism Research and Training (K-CART), Johnson County Community College and KU Edwards Campus.

STAFF PROFILES



STEPHEN ROBERTSON

Research
Graduate
Assistant

I am working as a lab tech under Kate Saunders and Dean Williams. At this point, I am unsure

on which of the projects I will primarily work (which is technically referred to as a “win-win situation”).

I earned my Bachelor’s degree (in psychology with a concentration on behavior analysis and philosophy minor) and Master’s degree (in psychological science with a concentration in behavior analysis) from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. During my time at JMU, I was afforded many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of research projects. My primary interests in psychology are behavior analysis, behavioral pharmacology and comparative animal behavior. I am still involved in some ongoing studies at JMU looking at resistance to extinction in single schedule preparations.

My research interests include behavioral pharmacology, aversive control, stimulus control and behaviorally based teaching methods. Some examples of the research projects that I have been involved with include: the impact of nutraceuticals (kava, valerian and St. Johns Wort) on rodent models of depression and anxiety, resistance to extinction in a rat model of AD/HD, the impact of amphetamine on resistance to extinction in rats, the impact of caffeine on impulsivity in humans, and foraging behavior in deer mice.

Eventually, I hope to pursue a PhD in experimental psychology with an emphasis on basic behavior analysis, behavioral pharmacology and/or behavioral toxicology.



SHEILA TSAU

Research
Assistant

Although my parents are originally from Taiwan, I was born in the

United States and have lived in a few different places throughout my life (TX, NM, CA, and now KS). I was most recently in Lawrence, KS, where my father works at the University of Kansas as a researcher in petroleum engineering, and where I graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Human Biology with a concentration in Psychology this past spring. My main interests lie in neuroscience; I hope to eventually enter graduate school or a joint MD/Ph.D. program and study the biological aspects of psychological disorders.

As an undergraduate at KU, I participated in neuroscience research in the laboratory of Dr. Joseph Steinmetz for two years before he relocated to Ohio State University in the fall of 2009. The lab investigated cerebellar-mediated learning and memory using the eye-blink classical conditioning paradigm in rabbit and rat models as well as neuro-recording and pharmacological infusions into specific areas of the brain. One goal of the studies was to develop an animal model of schizophrenia, for which there has been evidence of cerebellar abnormalities in previous research. Another pathology investigated was fetal alcohol syndrome and how cerebellar-dependent learning and memory is impacted by the neurological damage found in this condition.

I also participated in a summer research training program at the University of California, San Francisco, during the summer of 2008, where I worked in the laboratory of Dr. Dorit

Ron to investigate the role of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) in the development of or protection against alcohol addiction. Because the BDNF pathway has been shown to negatively regulate alcohol consumption, the lab was interested in how breakdowns in this pathway might contribute to alcoholism. Although the lab utilized techniques ranging from molecular biology to animal modeling, I worked mostly on the behavioral aspect using transgenic mice and different behavioral experiments.

I am a Research Assistant under Dr. Kathryn Saunders and Dr. Dean Williams here at the Life Span Institutes in Parsons. I have been primarily involved in Dr. Saunders' reading studies since arriving in August, and I hope to begin work in Dr. Williams' project, *Laboratory Models of Maladaptive Escape Behaviors*, soon. Working with everyone in the lab and learning about the ongoing studies has been interesting and enlightening, and I am excited to continue learning more and gaining further research experience during my time here at LSI.

PRESENTATIONS

- Ayres, C., Smith, T., Miksch, P., Newton, J., Bowman, D., Hastings, C. (2010, August 23). *Part C regional meeting*. Statewide presentation at Garden City, KS.
- Ayres, C., Smith, T., Miksch, P., Newton, J., Bowman, D., Hastings, C. (2010, August 24). *Part C regional meeting*. Statewide presentation at Newton, KS.
- Ayres, C., Smith, T., Miksch, P., Newton, J., Bowman, D., Hastings, C. (2010, August 25). *Part C regional meeting*. Statewide presentation at Topeka, KS.
- Hornback, M. (2010, August). *Joint planning process in inclusive classrooms*. Inservice at Liberal, KS.
- Stremel-Thomas, K. (August 3, 2010). "Cochlear Implants In Young Children Who Are Deaf-Blind." Pennsylvania Low Incidence Conference. State College, PA.
- Stremel-Thomas, K. (August 3, 2010). "Early Intervention Within Natural Routines." Pennsylvania Low Incidence Conference. State College, PA.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

DEAN WILLIAMS, Ph.D., has been appointed to the Board of Editors for the Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB; pronounced JAY-AB). JEAB was founded to meet the needs of those who had been attracted to the behavior analytic approach but were unhappy with the lack of a journal specializing

in that rapidly growing area. As described on its inside front page ever since, the new journal is "primarily for the original publication of experiments relevant to the behavior of individual organisms." JEAB started as a quarterly in 1958 but has appeared bimonthly since 1964.

DOCTORAL STUDENT PROFILE



LIDIA POSTALLI

Brazil

Doctoral Student in Special Education

Area of Interest: Instructional control and recombinaive generalization

My name is Lidia Postalli. I am from Brazil and a doctoral

student in Special Education, at Universidade Federal de Sao Carlos (Sao Carlos, Sao Paulo, Brazil) under the supervision of Deisy das Graças de Souza, PhD.

The focus of my doctoral dissertation is the control of behavior by instructions, or how this behavior is learned and how we come to understand the meaning of instructions.

This project has been developed as part of a larger research program of a bi-national Institute for Studies on Behavior, Cognition, and Teaching – INCT-ECCE (a partnership among seven Brazilian Universities and the University of Massachusetts Medical School, led by Dr. de Souza). The institute is supported by Brazil’s National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and by

Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP). As a PhD student, I have a scholarship from FAPESP (Grant #07/00119-7), which allows me to spend a semester visiting a research laboratory, as part of my training.

I decided to visit the Institute for Life Span Studies – Parsons, University of Kansas, to work with Dr. Kathryn Saunders. She and my advisor have had many scientific interactions in the recent past, due to their common research interests and Dr. Saunders is currently on the Advisory Board of the INCT-ECCE.

I will stay here for five months (from September, 2010 to January, 2011) and I hope to learn as much as I can, not only about scientific topics, but also about the way of life in the academia and in the city.

During this period, I am participating in laboratory meetings (during which we share data and discuss published articles) and reading and writing about my own research.

Visit the Life Span Institute (LSI) at Parsons website at <http://www.parsons.lsi.ku.edu>