

KENDALL GAZETTE

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New elementary school for autistic children to open

BY LINDA FEFFERMAN

The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism Inc. has announced the opening of its new elementary school at a second location, 8790 SW 94 St., on the Congregation Bet Breira campus (near Baptist Hospital).

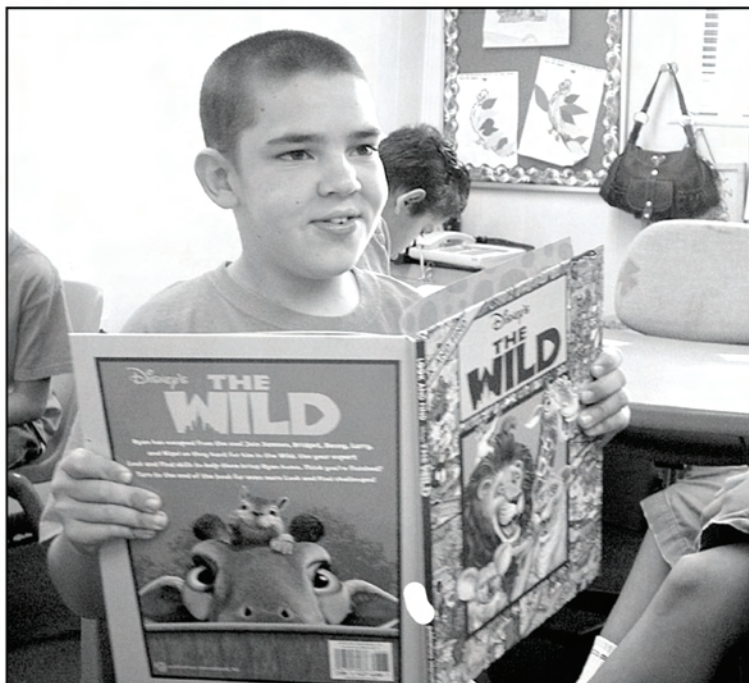
The community is invited to come out on June 14, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., for a fun-filled open house featuring tours of the facility, introductions to the director and staff, as well as activities and rides for the children.

The new school will be open to pre-school and elementary school children ages 3-12. The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism specializes in serving children diagnosed with classical Autism Spectrum Disorders and other social and communicative disabilities, including Asperger's Disorder, high-functioning autism, and nonverbal learning disabilities. It offers a unique, individualized education with an emphasis on social skills in a nurturing, therapeutic environment with a full comprehensive team approach.

The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism's education program provides a full day, 12-month program for students. The center has an early intervention class for young students ages 3-5, and a primary class with students ages 6-12. These classes provide intensive one-to-one behavioral intervention services, pullout therapy and social skills group training.

In addition, the curriculum includes a transition class for young students ages 3-5 years who are being transitioned to mainstream educational placements. These students receive 3-to-1 to 5-to-1 intervention services. The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism participates in a mainstream transition program with the Bet Breira school, and shares premises with that school.

With a multidisciplinary team of professionals including behavioral, music, speech, occupational and physical therapists, and Certified Special Education teachers, the Carrie Brazer Center for Autism provides a wide range of learning opportunities that foster growth in all essential areas. This integrated educational and therapeutic program promotes communicative, behavioral, academic, motor, adaptive, independ-



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ent living skills and social and emotional development.

The curriculum is highly individualized hands-on designed to address the specific needs of each student. Class sizes are small with a high teacher to student ratio. The program is based on the current research and best practices in the field. Teaching strategies and reinforcement methodologies are reviewed on an ongoing basis to maximize each student's success.

Shabbat and holiday services and Judaic studies programs will be available to Jewish students. Future plans include providing the CBC children with an opportunity to mainstream with the Bet Breira Day School children in music, art and play time. These plans also will allow Aspergers/High Functioning children to participate in academic classes at the Bet Breira school upon teacher recommendation.

Other programs at this location will begin with Summer Camp, June 9, and will continue with an after school and Super Saturday program year round.

Autism has reached epidemic proportions. It is the fastest growing serious developmental disorder in the U.S. Now, one in 150 children are diagnosed with autism. More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined.

Early intervention is critical to gain maximum benefits from existing therapy. Autism spectrum disorders can usually be reliably diagnosed by the age 3. (Autism Speaks 2008)

The main campus, located at 7425 SW 42 St., serves students with moderate to severe autism. This campus conducts classes for children in middle school, high school and young adulthood. The program integrates an academic curriculum with hands-on life skills training and comprehensive vocational services that provide students with a smooth transition into the adult working world.

Students begin their vocational training in the early grades, and as young adults may become independent workers in real job sites. The students operate their own store. They also prepare and sell food items, gift baskets and other items to the staff and other students as well as out in the community. They perform office work, postal service, and custodial jobs throughout the school. Students learn to work independently.

Full Day School begins Aug. 18, and July 3 is the last day to register. McKay Scholarships are accepted as full tuition for students whose Matrix score is 254 or 255 (based on a sliding scale fee). Parental intent must be filed by July 3 for enrollment in September. Visit <www.opportunityschools.org> for more information.

Generous scholarships for summer camp and other out-of-school programs, including after school, school holidays and teacher workdays, are available from the Children's Trust.

The center currently is accepting registration for Summer Camp, Day School and After School and Saturday programs for both locations. Call 305-262-5999 or visit the website at <www.cbc4autism.org> for information and to schedule a tour of both campuses.

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