



Summer 2003
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Empower

The Newsletter of The HillSprings Learning Center

Editors: Mark Vonarx
and Renée Hartsliel

President's Message

Did you know that our prisons are full of people with learning differences?

Did you know that many of these people could have led normal, productive lives but they simply didn't, or couldn't, find help in time?

A child, with no more serious an affliction than a learning difference, can become a criminal - unless adequate and appropriate assistance is provided.

Frustration with school work can spark anger and trigger compulsive behavior; conditions which can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, violence and chronic personal problems.

We are a group of concerned parents, educators and healthcare professionals who are working to STOP the downward spiral in Colorado

Springs. To this end, we have formed a nonprofit corporation – The HillSprings Learning Center.

HillSprings will be a half-day school which will provide children who have been diagnosed with specific learning disabilities or attention deficit disorders with the ability to cope and the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Our mission is to provide specialized, multi-sensory instruction in an empowering and caring environment, enabling diverse students with learning differences to achieve their full potential and become successful, independent learners.

Did you know that Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison and Charles Schwab, to mention

a few, learned differently? Keep them and their positive impact on the world in mind as you read through this, our first newsletter.

Perhaps one of our local learners with LD has the same potential . . .

. . . and your help may empower him or her to realize it.

*Charlotte "Charlie" Tye
President – HillSprings*

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The Hill School

www.hillcenter.org

HillSprings is modeled after The Hill Center, a private learning facility in Durham, North Carolina. The Hill Center has been helping kids with learning differences for over 25 years.

Since it's inception in 1977, it has served more than 1,500 students from more than 70 public and private schools across North Carolina.

Today, The Hill Center provides instruction to more than 150 students in grades 1 through 12.

Their secret to success?
A student to teacher ratio of never more than **4 to 1** and a **half-day** program.

Students attend their regular schools for the other half of the day. Thus, they continue to be socialized and are ready to return to the main stream, when the time comes

Over the years, The Hill Center has developed and refined a powerful methodology for teaching reading, written language and math

The average child attends The Hill Center for only two years and returns to regular schooling, fully functional and ready to succeed.

*Carole Young-Schroeder
Director of Information*



Pictured during training at The Hill Center are (from left) Charlie Tye, Lori McCauley, Rhonda Sunde, Karen Domme, Barb Ray and Carole Schroeder.

“Top Ten” Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will HillSprings start formal operations?

In an attempt to temper our enthusiasm with good judgment it seems that summer 2004 for a full-time program is the most realistic projection. We still need to raise several hundred thousand dollars to get started and fund raising takes time. However, several of our Hill Center-trained teachers will be offering individual programs starting this summer (see page 3).

2. Have you considered making HillSprings a Charter School?

Yes, this possibility was researched at great length. However, Charter Schools must adhere to strict guidelines regarding admissions and withdrawals. Because HillSprings will be for students with very specific types of learning differences and, therefore, cannot accommodate the full spectrum of learning difficulties, HillSprings is not a suitable candidate for becoming a Charter School.

3. How will acceptance to HillSprings be determined?

Each student will require a diagnosis of specific learning disability (to include hyperactivity and/or attention difficulties) by an accredited professional. In addition, each prospective student will be interviewed to determine suitability and appropriateness.

4. Will my high school student earn high school credits? Yes, HillSprings will be fully accredited.

5. Where will HillSprings be located? We are looking for suitable space. Let us know if you have an area preference or other suggestions.

6. What will the student-teacher ratio be at HillSprings?

The student teacher ratio is targeted at 4:1. This is one of the reasons that the costs are high - but the results are superb (i.e. students typically return to their regular school, full-time, after only two years).

7. What will the relationship be between HillSprings and the public schools?

HillSprings will be a supplemental option for students with specific learning disabilities in our community (remember, each student returns to their regular classroom in the afternoon to continue their socialization and participation).

8. How can I get involved?

First, learn as much as you can about The Hill Center methodology by logging onto www.hillcenter.org. Some good LD sites include: www.LDOnLine.org, www.Idcolorado.org, www.nclد.org (National Center for Learning Disabilities), www.schwablearning.com and www.allkindsofminds.org. For ADD-specific sites, try www.add.org or www.chadd.org (Children and Adults with ADD). A great dyslexia site is www.interdys.org.

Spread the word to any families who may be interested. Contact committee heads with questions and/or ideas.

9. How can I help?

In several ways. Donations are always appropriate and a donation slip has been provided for your convenience. If you have a special skill or interest, you can volunteer to work on one of our committees.

And, the bottom line . . .

10. How much will it cost to attend HillSprings?

It all depends on how much funding we can generate. We know that this method of special education is enormously expensive. For example, The Hill Center charges in excess of \$11,000 per learner per year. But we also know that many in our community will assist us in realizing our dream; *to make this outstanding program available to every student who needs it.*

The Founding of HillSprings

In the spring of 2002, a group of concerned parents and learning professionals grappled with the problem of inadequate resources for many of El Paso County's 'learning different' kids.

We found an answer with unanimous appeal: The Hill Center in Durham, North Carolina

The Hill Center appeal?

Children only attend for a half day. The other half is spent in a normal public or private school.

Also, the student to teacher ratio never exceeds 4 to 1.

No time was wasted in forming The HillSprings Learning Center, named in recognition of the close connection that has subsequently been formed between the two schools.

To date, we have registered HillSprings as a nonprofit corporation, written by-laws, developed a 3-year business plan and budget, applied for non-profit status with the IRS, and, thanks to a generous

donation from the Collier family, begun the training for our initial cadre of five teachers. These instructors are now being certified to use the powerful Hill Center methodology, developed over many years of success.

Research-based techniques are used to teach reading, written language and math, as well as the learning strategies that let students become self-sufficient learners.

We will work closely with the

teachers and schools of our students to develop appropriate modifications and accommodations to suit their special needs.

There is still much to be done before we can open our doors and really begin to help all those who so desperately need this support.

However, we remain committed to bringing this outstanding program to our community.

Every little bit helps . . .

Our grateful thanks go to our past donors and those who are considering a future contribution.

Any support you can give to this vital community project would be graciously appreciated.

For example, our teachers are returning to Durham for further training this fall and would gladly accept **frequent flyer miles**.

Summer Intensives

Cost: \$600 per session
 Dates: Session 1: June 9 - June 20
 Session 2: June 23 - July 3
 (9 day session @ \$540)
 Session 3: July 7 - July 18
 Session 4: July 21 - August 1
 Session 5: August 4 - August 5
 Time: 8:30 am - 11:30 am
 Location: The Colorado Springs School

Contact Barb Ray at 573-2785

Hill Center Model trained tutors will be offering 2-week programs for students K-8. These intensives provide daily instruction in reading, written language and math in a 4:1 or less student:teacher ratio setting.

These intensives have been designed to prevent regression of skills over the summer and to increase overall skill levels.

I Wish To Make A Tax Deductible Donation To HillSprings ...

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone # _____ Mobile # _____
 Email Address _____
 Donation Amount \$ _____ (Make checks payable to Carl West, Esq.)

- Please send future information to my email address
 Please send future information to my mailing address
 Please contact me for other assistance (volunteer work, grants, special assistance)

HillSprings Advisory Board

Some of our area's top educators and health professionals support HillSprings TLC.

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Parents of 3 successful young adults with LD



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The HillSprings Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

THE HILLSPRINGS LEARNING CENTER
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