

We empower students with learning differences to become confident, independent learners.

The HillSprings Learning Center is a unique, non-profit half day school for students with learning differences. It is modeled after the highly successful, research based program at The Hill Center (hillcenter.org) in Durham, NC. The academic year program is designed to provide individualized instruction to K-8 students in a group of 4 students to 1 teacher. Multisensory instruction in a structured environment gives students the opportunity to receive accelerated skill acquisition in reading, writing, math, study skills and success attributes such as self-awareness, goal setting and perseverance. HillSprings is also committed to developing the understanding of learning differences by providing information, consultation and workshops to educators and families in the Pikes Peak region. 🌱

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Fall 2009 Newsletter

The HillSprings Learning Center



Empower

Visit our website
www.hillsprings.org

The HillSprings Learning Center admits students of any race, color, gender, 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, gender, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships and other school-administered programs.



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The HillSprings Learning Center

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HillSprings Grand Re-opening!

On October 22, 2009 HillSprings, a non-profit school for students in grades 1-8 who have learning differences, celebrated the move to its new location, 2776 Janitell Road. The Chamber of Commerce held an official ribbon cutting welcoming HillSprings to its membership. Board members, staff, families and friends toured the new classrooms, offices, computer lab, student and parent libraries, and kitchen. The new facility doubles the previous size of the school and has a multipurpose room that will be used for workshops to train area teachers in the unique Hill methodology. Flowers donated by Rich Designs, an array of appetizers from the Picnic Basket donated by Craig Carnick, and wines donated by Alan Manley and Karen West made this a very special celebration for HillSprings supporters. 🌱



Charlie Tye cuts the ribbon at the grand re-opening ceremony.

Fundraising Through Partnerships

We believe our children should focus on learning, not generate revenue by selling overpriced items. We have some “effortless” opportunities in which you can help us raise funds. Thank you!

- Hundreds of merchants have signed up with eScrip to donate a portion of their revenues to HillSprings. You can help by registering your major credit cards (Visa, Discover) plus your Macy and Safeway cards and we will receive cash back from several stores and restaurants in our local area. There are also opportunities for you to shop the on-line mall at Eddie Bauer, Orvis or American Airlines and Carnival Cruises. Log on to www.escrip.com and choose Hill Springs (space between words) as the charity of your choice.
- Goodsearch.com is an internet search engine that donates half of its revenue, about a penny per search, to HillSprings. To make it your homepage – go to the internet, select tools, select general tab, enter <http://www.goodsearch.com> in the address box and then click OK. For your first web search, type HillSprings in the box that reads “Who do you Goodsearch for?” After the first time, it will automatically access our account 🌱

Our New Teacher Marcia Hafemeister

Marcia teaches a morning class of fifth and sixth graders. She has taught both in the classroom and as a reading resource teacher in local school districts. She is thrilled to be working with the students and staff of HillSprings and is grateful for such a wonderful opportunity. She and her husband, Jim, are fortunate to have both their grown children living in Colorado, and are looking forward to being grandparents for the first time in early March. 🌱



Marcia, third from left, joins the HillSprings team.

Scholarships for Teachers and Students

HillSprings has been the recipient of two grants which provide financial aid for teachers in the community who want to learn the Hill methodology and for students who would benefit from our unique instruction. In June 2009, we trained a large group of Pikes Peak area teachers who benefitted from grants from the **Price Family Foundation** and the **Creel-Harison Foundation**. After attending a workshop one of these teachers noted, "The best part of this program is the ability to truly differentiate for each student. I know the kind of success that other schools have experienced using the Hill methodology, so I am excited that students in my class can have the same chance of success". These two grants have also enabled us to offer financial aid to families as well. This school year we have awarded scholarships to 3 students in our daily program and 2 children who attend our after school RAP reading program. 🌱

Author! Author!

Carolyn Betts, a HillSprings board member, writer and public speaker has updated her book and rereleased it this fall. *A Special Kind of Normal: A Mother's Journey Through Autism to Destiny* captures autism's influence from the womb to adulthood and describes the life challenges she faced with her son Jeff, now a 39 year old adult. The book offers hope and inspiration as it tells the story of how mother and sister searched to provide for his special needs to develop the skills to reach his full potential. Jeff taught Carolyn that she had skills to cope and eventually find her life purpose. She has earned a masters degree in psychology and is a certified coach in Life Transitions.



Gary Unruh MSW, a HillSprings advisory board member, has written a ground breaking, action-oriented book, *Unleashing the Power of Parental Love*, to be released in January. Surprisingly, many parents and educators don't realize that children need to feel loved as much as they feel the need for food. Based on nearly 40 years in clinical practice working with families, Unruh explains this "loveable" belief is acquired through the child feeling fundamentally good, particularly when differences occur between parent and child. Even though it is not always easy when a parent is upset with a child, he has found that interactions with children need to first focus on keeping parent emotions in check, and then deal with changing the child's behavior.

Learn our "best practices", research based methodology in upcoming 2010 teacher workshops:

- **HillWrite** – Jan. 28-29, June 7-8
- **HillMath** – Feb. 18-19, June 10-11
- **HillRAP (Reading)** – June 3-4

For more information, or to register – www.hillsprings.org 🌱

Daniels Fund Provides Grant For District 2 Project

Last spring, the Daniels Fund granted nearly \$25,000 for a collaborative pilot program for professional development of a dozen Harrison D2 teachers. The teachers were trained in HillRAP and HillWrite at the end of May and practiced the highly effective methodology with 48 students during the summer programs held at Turman Elementary and Carmel Middle School. During the school year, those same teachers are working with small groups at 2 elementary and 2 middle schools. Throughout the 2009-2010 school year they will continue to receive coaching and formal observations/feedback to ensure the fidelity of the program. We believe that this nonprofit/public school partnership will reform the way teachers instruct their most challenging students and open doors to learning for children who are so often locked out. 🌱

Dyslexia Spells Success

October was national Dyslexia Awareness month and HillSprings took this opportunity to recognize adults and teens in our community who are successful, despite their learning difference of dyslexia. On Sunday, Oct. 18, Jay Hafemeister (the director of marketing for Carl's restaurants), Jennifer Martinez (reading interventionist at Taylor Elementary School), Melodee Pikaart (mother of 3 boys with dyslexia), Tom Schuck (principal of Colorado Springs Charter Academy) and teenagers Brittney Morris, Shea Hairston, Cassidy Fahey, and Connor Barkley told their amazing stories of self-awareness and determination that led to their successes in school and in life. Those families that attended were truly moved by the personal accounts and HillSprings will continue to host this event each October. 🌱

Raising CEOs – Competent Everyday Organizers

Sarah Ward, popular, innovative speaker from the Center for Executive Function for Skill Development outside of Boston, presented a practical strategies seminar for parents and professionals. It was cosponsored by the International Dyslexia Association Rocky Mountain Branch and held on November 7 in Castle Rock. Over a hundred participants from Denver and Colorado Springs learned about "executive function" – used to describe the skill set of goal setting, carrying out organized steps and modifying a plan to complete a task successfully.

The first part of the presentation covered strategies for teaching children thinking, planning and self-regulating. She explained students need to learn to be flexible, to see the "gray" area in situations and develop a range of solutions to problems. Later she covered ways to teach the passage of time, plan ahead, carry out routines and manage long-term assignments. She also included techniques to help kids think in an organized way, to self-initiate and manage their clothes, backpack, papers and personal belongings. The workshop was so well received that we are making plans to bring Sarah back to Colorado again. 🌱



Elen Steinberg, IDA, speaker Sarah Ward, Charlie Tye, HillSprings.