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Contact Us

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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.

visit our website at <http://www.hillsprings.org> and view our new video!

The HillSprings Learning Center



1257 Lake Plaza Dr.
Suite 120
Colorado Springs
Colorado 80906

The HillSprings Learning Center



EMPOWER

Summer 2005

HillSprings provides specialized instruction in a caring environment

Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz to Visit Colorado Springs in October

The HillSprings Learning Center is sponsoring a presentation by Drs. Bennett and Sally Shaywitz, nationally known researchers on reading processes and learning differences. As pediatricians and parents, the couple have been studying memory and learning for more than 25 years. They are co-directors of the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development's Yale University School of Medicine Center for the Study of Learning and Attention. They con-

ducted The Connecticut Longitudinal Study begun in 1983, which tracked reading performance and ability of more than 445 kindergarteners until they were young adults. They studied everything from prenatal care to educational experiences, in order to see how children learned to read and what factors contributed to reading problems. Dr. Sally Shaywitz, chosen as one of America's Top Doctors, lectures regularly throughout the country, has appeared on CNN, Good Morning America and The Today Show. In 2003, her book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*, was published as a clear, practical, science-based advice for the families of one in five American children who have trouble

reading. She presents proven, practical techniques that, along with hard work and the right help from parents and teachers, can enable anyone to overcome them.

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Great News for

2005

The "New" HillSprings Logo

Have you noticed our new logo? Thanks to Praco's President Neche Hall and Art Director Craig Rae, we now have a logo that represents our vision, our mission and our successes with children. Back in January when Neche heard the HillSprings' story, she offered her company's expert design services to us free of charge. We love the image of the student that not only signifies an independent learner, but a child full of confidence in the classroom. We are so very grateful to Praco for partnering with us!



Jean Neville (far right), Director of Professional Development at The Hill Center in Durham, NC, visits with students at HillSprings in February 2005



El Pomar Support for The HillSprings Learning Center

Based in Colorado Springs, the El Pomar Foundation, www.elpomar.org, is one of the oldest and largest foundations in the Rocky Mountain west. The El Pomar Fellowship Program provides two-year hands-on training for post-graduate students committed to working with non-profit organizations. As part of their training, the Fellows choose non-profits to assist.

The HillSprings Learning Center has been fortunate enough to be chosen by El Pomar Fellow, Sarah Staller, to assist us in developing our programs with emphasis on improving our fund raising and developing other resources. In addition to working with HillSprings Director Charlie Tye, Sarah has organized board member training sessions, facilitated a Board Retreat and is working with Fundraising Chairperson, Lori McCauley, on ways to target and improve our efforts.

Our thanks also to Tamarind Doane of El Pomar for her advocacy and assistance in securing El Pomar's generous assistance.

HillSprings Celebrates Successful First Year!

HillSprings board members and faculty are proud to announce the completion of our first school year. Twelve students in grades 3 through 8 with learning differences or attention issues participated in the initial program, attending each morning to participate in reading, written language and math instruction. HillSprings' unique teaching methodology, modeled after the highly acclaimed Hill Center in Durham, NC, helped these students to achieve an average of over a year's progress in 7 months time between pre and post testing. Some students showed two to three years improvement, especially in writing skills.

Another observable accomplish-

ment for all students was social and emotional growth, helping students toward their goal of independence and self-advocacy. This spring, Gary Unruh held social skills classes for the middle schoolers, while throughout the year, teachers helped students to understand their strengths as well as their learning challenges.

Currently, the Summer Program has 22 students enrolled in grades 1 through 8. Joining school year faculty members, Lori McCauley, Charlie Tye and Barb Ray, are Carole Young-Schroeder and Barb White. All students, except for one, are new to our program and found out about HillSprings by "word of mouth" in the community.

Donor List

We wish to thank our generous donors who have contributed during our first successful school year.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Kjell & Titti Andersson | Steve & Carol Myers |
| Harry & Vicki Anderson | Pikes Peak Community |
| Bill & Cate Boddington | Foundation |
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What do students think of HillSprings?

Here are excerpts from each student's feedback:

...I predict that schools of the future for kids with learning disabilities will be like this school. We get to write paragraphs about food, one million dollars and other things. We write in steps so it is easy.

Drew

...HillSprings taught me ways to manage my frustration. When I first came here, I always got angry when I got the wrong answers. Now I calm myself down.

Tanner

...I love the small classes because we get more attention. A lot of schools say they have individualized learning when they really don't. At HillSprings, it's truly individualized learning.

Barron

...I get snacks every day. They're delicious! Next, my reading is improving. I'm, reading faster and better.

Racheal

Here are some groovy facts about HSLC. First, oral drill helps you in reading, writing, and math. You repeat old questions and get new questions. A second exercise is timed test. It will help you read words more quickly and efficiently...

Austin

...At HillSprings I started to take my work more seriously and stopped goofing off (my teacher agrees). I am able to work at my own pace and level instead of doing the same thing as everybody else. Now I enjoy reading and want to read more books.

KT

...The teachers are fun. They teach you a lot of math, reading, and manners.

Lucas

...HillSprings is great, so great. It is small, and it has a good way to teach. There are less students and it is easier to do work. Doesn't it sound great?

Vance

...HSLC has taught me a very important lesson on minding my own business. I still need to work at it. It has helped me with my math problems. I do not get stuff very easily, but Ms. Ray explains it in steps and gives us strategies to help the class figure out the problems.

Katie

...The great thing about HillSprings is that it's an Ideal Focusing Environment (IFE). HillSprings makes learning effortless because it's easier to focus. When I am in an IFE, I tend to put out more high quality work.

Chris

...I've improved on a lot of stuff at HillSprings. I used to not be good at handwriting, and now I am better. At HillSprings I've learned Touch Math. Touch Math is an easier way to do math.

Jax

...Transitioning from my former school to HillSprings is like turning on a light in a dark room. I think I have finally found the place where I belong.

Adam

What HillSprings Has Accomplished on Behalf of Our Son:

A Parents' Perspective

We believe that the single word that best describes the essence on which his progress has been based is TRUST. Clearly, trust is a key element to have in a learning environment, but in his case, this was not automatic.

This year our son grew to trust his teacher. His teacher, using her solid experience in special education and without any preconceived ideas, was able to determine rather quickly and accurately, where he 'was'. She went there, built on how he learns, and did so with an individually based focus. An important aspect of this was our son's feeling that his teacher respected what he was communicating to her regarding what he felt he needed, and that she then acted on it in a most positive manner.

This was not the case in his previous school environments. For example, our son has been an excellent speller from day one. However, for whatever reason, he is unable to look up a word in the dictionary without getting very frustrated by the 2nd or 3rd letter. No matter how much 'practice' he may be encouraged to take in 'looking up words', the result is fairly predictable; namely, frustration, and a wonder why he has to do it. From his perspective this was particularly frustrating because he taught himself to keyboard in the 3rd grade (or earlier) and has had access to an electronic dictionary.

Our son learned to trust his classmates. He soon picked up on the fact that each of his classmates has their own issues. He quickly observed that he is not alone in his learning differences. Facilitated by his teacher, his class grew to trust each other. A very important result is that he now has friends and wants to have more. This was not the case when he started HillSprings this past fall.

Our son learned to trust us, his parents. He feels that we finally got him into an environment where he can prosper, to continue to learn, and to enjoy school.

In conclusion, we have been extremely happy for our son as he has had a great year at HillSprings, and is looking forward to another year. This was not necessarily the case in his previous school environments. We are very grateful that the HillSprings Community has been available for him and for us.

PPCF Awards Grant to HillSprings

The Pikes Peak Community Foundation awarded HillSprings its first grant, submitted by our volunteer grant writer, Patricia Farris Skolout. The foundation gives priority to initiatives that effectively address community needs. It supports programs that

provide incentives for young people to achieve educational goals. As HillSprings continues to prove that it is a successful program for children with learning differences, we anticipate more funding by organizations such as PPCF.