

4-11

Car phone  
12 St., Down



EMPLOYMENT

- Child care
- Employment agencies
- Help wanted
- Resumes
- Sales help wanted
- Trade schools
- Employment Aids
- Work wanted

do not appear today

Child Care Providers

NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

**4-11**  
 Car phone  
 12 St., Down  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
 Child care  
 Employment agencies  
 Help wanted  
 Resumes  
 Sales help wanted  
 Trade schools  
 Employment Aids  
 Work wanted  
 do not appear today  
**Child Care Providers**  
 NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

**4-11**  
 Car phone  
 12 St., Down  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
 Child care  
 Employment agencies  
 Help wanted  
 Resumes  
 Sales help wanted  
 Trade schools  
 Employment Aids  
 Work wanted  
 do not appear today  
**Child Care Providers**  
 NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

**4-11**  
 Car phone  
 12 St., Down  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
 Child care  
 Employment agencies  
 Help wanted  
 Resumes  
 Sales help wanted  
 Trade schools  
 Employment Aids  
 Work wanted  
 do not appear today  
**Child Care Providers**  
 NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

**4-11**  
 Car phone  
 12 St., Down  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
 Child care  
 Employment agencies  
 Help wanted  
 Resumes  
 Sales help wanted  
 Trade schools  
 Employment Aids  
 Work wanted  
 do not appear today  
**Child Care Providers**  
 NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

**4-11**  
 Car phone  
 12 St., Down  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
 Child care  
 Employment agencies  
 Help wanted  
 Resumes  
 Sales help wanted  
 Trade schools  
 Employment Aids  
 Work wanted  
 do not appear today  
**Child Care Providers**  
 NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT on Plainfield. Full time Experienced. Non-smok

# MORNING NEWS

A publication of Jenison Public Schools. Jenison, Michigan. March 1993



Meet the Editors: Pictured above are (l to r) Erika Broek, Amy Lindrup, and Christopher Fleck (Leslie Moore and Sarah Lynn Cain not pictured), Editors of what we believe is the world's first Social Story Book for individuals with autism. Story page 7.

Also in this issue:

- LOOKING FOR ANSWERS: Talking with Wilson of ABC's *Home Improvement*
- Learning in the Community
- Life Centered Career Education
- Ordering Information for the Social Story Book
- For Your Information - Lots of stuff, some of it is free

Named after that part of the day which presents the greatest opportunity,  
**THE MORNING NEWS**  
is a publication of Jenison Public Schools.

**March 1993**

*Address all articles, inquiries or orders to: Carol Gray or Maureen Dutkiewicz,  
Jenison Public Schools, 8375 20th, Jenison, Michigan 49428. Phone (616) 457-8955.*

©Jenison Public Schools, 1993. Duplication for non-profit purposes allowed with credit to Jenison Public Schools.

---

**LOOKING FOR ANSWERS:  
Talking with Wilson of ABC's *Home Improvement*  
About Autism**

-Carol Gray

In my opinion, some of the best moments on television are on *Home Improvement*, when the main character, Tim, has a discussion over his back fence with his neighbor, Wilson. It is Wilson who intrigues me. Imagine having an ever-present person just beyond your "back fence" who, without hesitation, could calm your anxieties, explain your fears, and bring wisdom to confusion. In terms of the field of autism, it wouldn't hurt to have a "Wilson" just beyond the fence of each school and home to shed light on questions now and then. Wilson could answer questions surrounding the causes of autism, or questions which are currently the focus of research studies, or questions regarding facilitated communication, auditory training, and educational interventions. If only we had Wilson in the "backyard" of autism, he would be a valuable resource; fortunately, on closer inspection, I think Wilson may be more accessible than we think.

To introduce Wilson to those of you unfamiliar with *Home Improvement*, consider that Wilson may be better understood as "what" than a "who." Tim turns to Wilson for advice on a variety of topics, most related to his family. While it isn't uncommon for a character on a television show to give advice, Wilson has interesting characteristics which set him apart. Rarely do you see Wilson's entire face - only his eyes are visible over the back fence. Wilson interacts only with one member of the family, Tim. Wilson never touches anyone. While Wilson patiently responds to problems and crises, he never has a current crisis of his own.

It's as if the backyard fence places Wilson beyond all those factors that touch and influence every other character on the show. While others make mistakes, Wilson never fumbles. Wilson can always see the bigger picture, the broader

implications, the emotional "aerial view" of any situation. He's older (though his attitudes are current and free of the biases which often come with age). He's wiser (though he never takes credit for his wisdom). He's always there, never missing a cue, never over stepping his bounds or offering help when it is not asked for (the guy never even steps out of his *yard!*).

Why doesn't the infallibility of this picture perfect character irritate the American public? I believe the answer lies in the fact that we don't *perceive* Wilson as a person. I believe to the audience, "Wilson" is something else which is presented to us through this character.

**Wilson is time to think.** Tim illustrates this adult version of "time out" when he retreats to his back yard to talk with Wilson each week. For us, time to think is a chance to reassess things on our own, in our own way. It's a personal form of "silence" - whether it's meditation, quilting, running, walking alone, walking with someone, painting, playing Solitaire, playing Monopoly, or something else. "Time to think" is whatever we do as individuals which helps us respond effectively once again. "Time to think" is often inaccurately referred to as "free time", a term which disguises it's extreme importance. People "talk to Wilson" the best when they are engaged in a hobby or something they just love to do for fun - which, by the way, is often what Wilson himself is doing when he talks to Tim.

**Wilson is the power of *expanded* and *accurate* observation;** *expanded* meaning he often describes the perspectives of other characters, *accurate* meaning his assumptions are minimal. This part of Wilson is nothing new to the field of autism. Current research points out the importance of observation, especially in terms of first regarding the behaviors of individuals with autism as communicative. The best observations are made by stepping back a little, just beyond a "backyard fence." It is from expanded observations, like Wilson's, that Tim returns to the original situation with renewed effectiveness. And so can we.

**Wilson is the ability to observe a person simultaneously from two vantage points.** While he recognizes what makes each character individual, he also understands what people *have in common*, regardless of their abilities or challenges. As a result, Wilson's advice has an "aerial view" quality to it - advice which "fits" the current situation while at the same time applies to other people and settings.

**Wilson understands that he can never claim to be "Tim," or assume he is capable of having Tim's thoughts or feelings.** While Wilson often recounts a past experience of his own in reference to Tim's current situation, he never claims his experience is identical to Tim's. Wilson understands the difference between a similar past experience and claiming to "know" how Tim feels. This part of Wilson is a weekly reminder that time spent listening should exceed time spent claiming to *know* the motivations and feelings of *other people*.

**Wilson is accurate information.** While we value accurate information, research is a slow process. It's interesting to note that Wilson on *Home Improvement* is not a fast mover. For the same reason Tim doesn't tell Wilson to "Talk faster," or "Get to the point," we hesitate to rush a research project as it inches along - there's this feeling that by nature it is already moving as fast as it can. I suppose if we wanted information without accuracy, we could get an encyclopedia full of answers by tomorrow. Sometimes it seems in our field information comes from two sources - those sources we have trusted for years, and those sources we heard about yesterday which we want to trust because their information is so incredibly exciting. The frustration settles in somewhere between our understanding that accurate answers require time, and the urgency and importance of our questions. Still, it would be short-sighted to focus only on answers.

**Wilson is creativewisdom.** That's one word, meaning not just wisdom and not just creativity, but both. Wilson demonstrates that what really makes any answer effective is 1) which process we use to arrive at the answer; 2) how an answer is translated into something useful; and 3) how, and when, it is shared. From the *process* of looking for answers, Wilson has achieved his wisdom, and it is his creativity which guides him in knowing which answers go where - and the best way to share them.

The fact is, Wilson does not have the answers to our questions. What he is, though, is a weekly demonstration of how to seek answers, and just as important, what to do with them once we have them. Wilson isn't a person. Wilson is a process for people in search of answers. Wilson is a process which requires time to think, observe, and listen, and which results in the creative application of accurate information.

In this and every issue of THE MORNING NEWS, it's our turn - yours and ours - to "talk with Wilson." Time to meet in the back yard of autism, collectively think things through, listen to other perspectives, and share ideas and information. Time to demonstrate that in the continual search for accurate answers, there's plenty of Wilson among us.

Welcome to this issue of **THE MORNING NEWS.**

---

**Editor's Note:** One thing which differentiates Wilson from THE MORNING NEWS is we are pretty sure Wilson has a steady income. We are noting a record number of *new* subscribers this year (well over 130), which we warmly welcome. On the other hand, we cannot afford to lose the staff time paid subscriptions would require, and we need your financial assistance to continue. All donations are tax-deductible, and donors receive a receipt. Any amount is sincerely appreciated. Send a check (*made out to Jenison Public Schools*), to the address at the start of this newsletter. Write *Morning News Account* at the bottom of the check. In our next issue, we will gratefully list the names of MORNING NEWS contributors. (We'll send a "I read it in THE MORNING NEWS" t-shirt, XL, for contributions of \$25 or more.) **THANKS!**



Pictured Above: (Left) That's Ted a student at Jenison High School, in his vocational training placement at 7-Eleven. (Right) Giving instructions to Ted in the photo on the right is Mr. Michael Schneider, manager at Jenison's 7-Eleven.

## Learning in the Community: The Vocational Training Program, Jenison High School

- by Ted and Carol Gray

There's nothing like first hand experience! Students with developmental disabilities, including autism, who attend Jenison High School participate in a variety of community based vocational experiences each year. This year, the program has expanded in number of students served, as well as the number of participating businesses and placement options. Currently, we have 15 student placements in area businesses. A closer look at a vocational training site experience is shared by Ted Mulder, who writes:

*I work at 7-Eleven on Tuesday afternoons. I put merchandise on the shelves. Sometimes we re-stock beverages in the cooler. I like my job, because I am learning to do different things in the community.*

*Mike is my boss. He is nice. He helps me when I need help.*

*I enjoy seeing people come in the store to buy things. They buy Slurpies and candy.*

Dale Ranson, the classroom teacher in the secondary program for students with autism, has expanded the program to include pre-vocational community experiences for students in volunteer organizations. Through this segment of the program, students learn through a variety of experiences while assisting others in need. Ted also participates in this segment of the program at the Food Pantry at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids, and provides us with a description of his work there:

*I work at the Westminster Food Pantry every Tuesday morning from 9:30 - 11:30. I usually re-package powdered milk, laundry soap, coffee, and sometimes dry cereal. I like my job because I'm helping people. The other people are nice who work there. Most of the time my job is easy. It's been a good experience.*

Beginning at age 16, each student in vocational training participates in a series of several different vocational experiences. An ongoing component of each placement is to teach students goal setting and self evaluation skills. Vocational training is part of an overall educational program focused on an outcome of successful transitions for young adults from school to life in the community. (Subscribers to THE MORNING NEWS last year may remember Donna, who graduated in May, 1992 to a job at The Worden Company, a manufacturer of office furniture in Holland, Michigan. Donna participated in several vocational training placements prior to graduation.)

**Editor's Note:** Last year we had the opportunity to print articles written by students in other states about their educational program. We hope we have that opportunity again this year in our May issue - please encourage students of all ages to write us! Photos welcomed and will be returned after publication.

---

**About the following article:** There are many new curricula available, and it is often hard to determine at face value what their effectiveness may be in actual practice. The Life Centered Career Education (L.C.C.E.) curriculum described in this article is currently implemented in the program for students with developmental disabilities at Jenison High School. We'd like to hear from you regarding other effective curricula to share in future issues of THE MORNING NEWS. Include ordering information with your article. C'mon, write!

## **Life-Centered Career Education: LCCE**

**-Dale Ranson**

The Life-Centered Career Education curriculum is designed to give special needs students the essential skills to function at home, at work and in the community. It centers on the four aspects of "work" that we all are involved in. These are community/family member, citizen/volunteer, employee and leisure/avocational participant. It helps the student to gain the skills necessary to be able to enjoy and to contribute in each of these areas.

There are three major curriculum areas: Daily Living Skills, Personal-Social Skills and Occupational Guidance and Preparation. Each of these main areas is broken down into major competencies, twenty-two in all. These twenty-two competencies are then broken down into subcompetencies, ninety-seven in all. For example in the area of Daily Living Skills one of the competencies is Buying, Preparing and Consuming Food. It is broken down into six subcompetencies ranging from purchasing food to planning and eating a balanced meal. Each of the subcompetencies falls into one of three Career Stages: Career Awareness, Career Exploration or Career Preparation. The Awareness stage introduces the student to basic background information. The Exploration stage exposes the student to what others do in relation to the objective and gives them the opportunity for self analysis and hands on experience. The Preparation stage culminates in performing the subcompetency.

If all this sounds confusing it really is not. At the beginning of each competency unit they explain what is needed for each lesson, if there is homework, what guest speakers are required and which lessons involve a field trip. Each lesson is very clearly and specifically presented with the lesson objective spelled out, what resources will be needed, a lesson introduction, detailed description of the task presented and how to evaluate the success of the lesson. Also any worksheets or homework sheets needed are supplied.

The aspects of L.C.C.E. that we find most appealing is its thoroughness and its application to the "real world." As in any curriculum program we have ever used we make our own modifications to fit our classrooms and individual student needs. One critical element is that all those involved in using the program must coordinate their efforts very carefully. This is because the program is infused into the regular curriculum as much as possible. We are using the Citizenship unit in Government class and the Getting Around the Community unit in Geography class. So knowing what everyone is doing and how they are doing it becomes vital to providing continuity to the students as they progress through the program.

We are in our first year using the program and are learning a lot. We are constantly finding better and more efficient ways to implement it and are looking forward to expanding its use in the future.

**Editor's Note:** If you would like ordering information on the L.C.C.E. Curriculum, Donn E. Brolin, Editor, contact: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091-1589. (Yes, we are continuing to use The Curriculum System in our vocational training sites. L.C.C.E. is a strong and varied curriculum, and a terrific addition to our program.)

## **The Social Story Book**

Most of the letters and phone calls we receive from subscribers are in reference to social stories, and our soon to be available Social Story Book. We are very sorry we do not have room to print all the letters (and the stories!) you have sent us. (In our next issue, we will be sharing hints and suggestions we have received from subscribers.) One thing we often hear is people are hesitant to write that "first story," as this letter from Sandy McDonnell of Okemos, Michigan describes:

A parent of one of the young students with autism I work with shared information about social stories. She had the opportunity to attend a workshop training others to write and implement social stories. She came back to the district very excited by this technique and shared the information with me.

I had an opportunity about a month later to write a social story for her son regarding how to do addition. The first story was very difficult. I'm sure part of the difficulty was my fear of doing something wrong. The student loved the story and has shown progress in addition. We still have some trouble spots but are in the process of addressing this in the story. It is truly a technique that is simple, understandable, and easy to implement with great results.

Because we were aware that "first stories" may be difficult to write, and also because we quickly came to realize there were so many situations to describe in stories, we recruited the help of Mrs. Sandy Johnson's Psychology and Sociology students to write stories. The result is the Social Story Book, written entirely by these Jenison High School students. The initial selection and editing of stories was completed by Carol Gray and Maureen Dutkiewicz.

The Social Story Book is in the final editing process, thanks to the efforts of Jenison High School seniors (pictured on our cover), who comprise the Editing Committee. There are five chapters in the book: *Home, School, Community, Social, and Miscellaneous*. Each Editor has assumed complete responsibility for a chapter in the book, and each chapter contains stories covering a wide variety of topics. (The exception to this is in the HOME chapter, where we somehow ended up with 15 stories written by 15 different authors on how to brush teeth - a concept not foreign to a small community like Jenison with more dentists and orthodontists than there are teeth. Don't worry - we will not print all 15 how to brush teeth stories!) We are serious when we say that without the generous investment of time by these talented young adults,



there would not be a Social Story Book this year. They are literally making it all possible.

The book is unique not only in content, but also in format. The Social Story Book will include accompanying MacIntosh (Clarisworks) software. This will allow you to individualize any story in the book, or to print out extra copies of stories. The book will be sold as a filler for a three ring notebook, and stories will be printed so they can be taken out, copied, and cut apart by concepts (helpful for those who mount the stories on black construction paper.)

**If you think you would like to order the Social Story Book, to be safe you must pre-order your copy by April 25, 1993.** We are not able to print extra copies for sale at a later time, and will only be printing books for those who have pre-ordered. A second edition is not likely, so if you wish to order more than one copy we suggest you pre-order all copies now. Pre-ordering a book means:

- 1) We will place your name and address on a list.
- 2) When the book becomes available, you will receive a letter from us describing the book in detail (# of stories, # of pages, and *possibly* the table of contents) and indicating the cost of the book+postage.
- 3) You will have two to three weeks to send us a check for your book.
- 4) You can change your mind. If you do not send us a check by the date indicated in the letter you receive from us, we will assume you do not wish to purchase the book and will make it available to someone else.

To reserve a book, send us a note with your name and address or fill out the form below and mail to the address at the beginning of this newsletter. Please do not send any money at this time (unless, of course, it's a contribution to THE MORNING NEWS!)

I'd like to reserve a copy of The Social Story Book, and I'm not sending you any money.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



**PAST THE 'USE BY' DATE.**  
Information and/or forms in this section are no longer accurate or usable. Please disregard.

## For Your Information...

- A second book of social stories which presents new social responses to children with autism (taking turns in conversation, handling mistakes, etc. etc.) is currently being written. It will also contain software and related instructional materials. Ordering information will be made available to subscribers when the book goes to print.
- A free packet of information on how to write social stories, including sample stories, is currently available on request. To receive this information, write to Maureen Dutkiewicz at the address at the start of this newsletter.
- The Autism Society of America and the Eden Family of Programs have a 55 page book available, A New World - Facilitating Employment Opportunities for People with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities: A Parent's Guide to the Social Security Administration and Social Security Work Incentive Programs. This book is free while a limited supply lasts. To order, contact the Autism Society of America, (301)565-0433, FAX: (301)565-0834.
- What is the rationale for including secondary students with developmental disabilities in career and technology skills training programs, and how might they be successfully included? Leah Spires Mitchell, Education Specialist, wrote a paper on that topic for the South Carolina State Department of Education, Inclusion of Students with Disabilities into the Greenville County Tech Prep Program: A Natural Process, which she would be happy to share with other MORNING NEWS subscribers. You may contact Leah at Wade Hampton High School, Pine Knoll Drive, Greenville, S.C. 29609 to ask for a copy.
- That All May Worship is an interfaith handbook on how to involve people with disabilities in all aspects of worship. The manual sells for \$10 for single copies; bulk orders are less. A free brochure describing the handbook is available from the Religion and Disability Program, National Organization on Disability, 910 16th Street, N.W., #600, Washington, D.C. 20006.
- The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, N.I.C.H.C.Y., is a national information and referral service. They provide free information to parents and professionals working on behalf of young people with disabilities. They have a brochure describing their services and resources, many of which are available without cost. In addition, they will send a publications list of materials. Single copies of items on the publications list are free and duplication is encouraged with credit to N.I.C.H.C.Y.. If interested, write or call: National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013-1492. (703) 893-6061 (local), (800) 999-5599 (toll free).
- The Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities at Indiana University is a great resource. Contact them for a list of practical and reasonably priced publications. Address: Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities (ATTN: LIBRARY), Indiana University, 2853 E. 10th Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47408. Phone: (812) 855-6508.

---

### In our next issue in May, 1993:

*Experiences with Social Stories from Across the Country: Hints from Subscribers  
(Help us write this one! Send us your ideas!)*

*We will feature contributions from individuals with autism: Send us poems, pictures, articles, etc.*

**...and more!**